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Clinical chemistry as scientific discipline: Historical perspectives

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Abstract

The fundamental ideas which underlie clinical chemistry as an independent scientific field were formed over the course of centuries. Exactly 200 years ago the first modern concepts for this discipline were formulated in close connection with the restructuring of medical education during the French Revolution on the one hand, and the emergence of a new idea of a "clinic" on the other hand. However, not until 1840 was clinical chemistry institutionalized as academic subject and simultaneously integrated into medical teaching. After about 1860, clinical chemistry was practiced by the clinicians themselves in close relationship with clinical activities, yet again with emphasis on teaching. In this period, clinics and hospitals established "clinical laboratories". With the start of the 20th century, after biochemistry had developed into an independent scientific field, clinical chemistry continued to evolve in close relationship with that latter discipline. This was particularly true in the United States, where an "American School of Clinical Biochemistry" emerged which was to greatly influence the field.



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Keywords

Clinical chemistry; History; Clinical biochemistry; Education

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