

The introduction of variolation 'A La Turca' to the West by Lady Mary Montagu and Turkey's contribution to this.

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Abstract

Aims

This study deals with the history of variolation as the oldest immunization method to be transferred from East to West, with emphasis on Turkey's role in this transmission.

Scope

The technique of variolation was used by various ancient civilizations such as those in India, Tibet and many other parts of Asia. It was based on the subcutaneous inoculation of attenuated pustule material in patients. The method was brought to Anatolia by the Seljuks through the Caucasus and was widely used by the Ottomans for a long period of time. The West learned of this method for the first time mainly through the writings of Dr. Timoni and Lady Mary W. Montagu in the 18th century. Lady Montagu not only

wrote letters explaining this method, but also worked actively to introduce it in Europe.

Conclusion

Since variolation carried the risk of infection, it was replaced by a safer method called vaccination discovered by Jenner (1789), which led to the eradication of smallpox from the world. Despite the fact that vaccination ultimately superseded variolation in Western medical practice, Turkey played a key role as a bridge between civilizations in the transfer of this earlier treatment method to the West.



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Keywords

Variolation; Smallpox; Lady Montagu; Turkey

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An earlier version of this text at a preliminary stage was presented as a poster [see Dinc G, Ulman YI. Introduction of the Variolation A La Turca to the West by Lady Mary Montagu. Proceedings of the 40th International Congress of the History of Medicine, vol. 1 (Budapest-Hungary August 26–30th, 2006), p. 233–234.

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Bibliography of British History, education, despite some error, annihilates the materialistic Toucan.