The phrase self-determination frames the separatist question in a misleading way; it obscures the territorial aspects of the dispute. At issue is not a relationship between...

The making of domestic medicine: gender, self-help and therapeutic determination in household healthcare in South-West England in the late seventeenth century


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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores household healthcare in the later seventeenth century, particularly the extent of household production of medicines based on medicinal receipts. Medicinal receipts were widely collected in the early modern period although the extent to which these recipes were in ongoing use has not been well-established. The aims of this research are to consider the health concerns and activities of lay women and men, to identify resources available for self-help healthcare, and to establish factors affecting selection and use of medicinal receipts. Accounts are analysed alongside family letters and receipt collections, from selected households in South-West England, to identify medicinal supplies and medical services provided by apothecaries, physicians, surgeons and other individuals. Households differ in terms of ingredients purchased, preparations preferred, suppliers, therapeutic strategies used, and the extent of use of medical practitioners.

Recorded ingredient purchases match few receipts although there is evidence of some favourite preparations being made. Other resources are considered, including gifts of advice and remedies, and plant ingredients from gardens and the wild. I argue that use of these other resources depended on factors such as knowledge, including plant identification skills, and material considerations, including labour availability. Purchased medicines appeared to become increasingly significant in self-help whilst opportunities for gift medicine may have been reduced. I contrast the gentlewoman healer and the patient consumer in their assessment of medicinal receipts, and their use of medicines with children. Both demonstrated strategies for maintaining therapeutic determination and influencing the approach of medical practitioners in relation to their own complaints. This study shows that medicinal receipt collections did not fully reflect the extent of lay healthcare activities and differences between lay household healthcare practitioners. It contributes to our understanding of the gendered shaping of domestic medicine, and the relationship of household healthcare to medical authority and the developing commercial and professional medical market in the eighteenth century.

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peoples and states, but a relationship between people, states, and territory. Separatist arguments make little sense unless interpreted in a territorial light. The notion of self-determination of peoples increased in prominence after the end of the First World War. In the domestic context; actual consent rarely exists, and for this reason political philosophers have fallen back on theories of tacit consent, arguments which are fictitious. Tacit consent theories do not crumble in the face of a citizen's loud protest that a government cannot legitimately represent him or her. Buy or Rent Household Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England as an eTextbook and get instant access. With VitalSource, you can save up to 80% compared to print. How did 17th-century families in England perceive their health care needs? What household resources were available for medical self-help? To what extent did households make up remedies based on medicinal recipes? Drawing on previously unpublished household papers ranging from recipes to accounts and letters, this original account shows how health and illness were managed on a day-to-day basis in a variety of 17th-century households. It reveals the extent of self-help used by families, explores their favourite remedies and analyses differences in approaches to medical matters. In seventeenth-century England, marriage and sexual morals played a far more important social role than nowadays. A family centred around a married couple represented the basic social, economic and political unit. In the Stuart period, a husband’s “rule” over his wife, children and servants was seen as an analogy to the king’s reign over his people—a manifestation of a hierarchy constituted by God. A woman was regarded as the ‘weaker vessel’ (a phrase taken from the New Testament)—a creature physically, intellectually, morally and even spiritually inferior to a man; therefore, the man had a ri