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History of therapeutics

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Cure or kill?

History of different therapeutics of Venereal Diseases.

abstract

In 1492 was the first pandemic of syphilis in Europe, originally believed to have come from the New World. Since the epidemic in Europe coincided with Columbus' return from the American in 1493, some historians have theorized that the disease was actually brought back to the Europe by sailors who contracted it from natives in the West Indies. Other historians disagreed, however, pointing to ancient accounts in writings as varied as the Bible and Chinese documents that are eerily in agreement with symptoms associated with late stage syphilis.

Many doctor thought if the diseases came from the New World, the remedy had to come from the same place: the import of Sarsaparilla, Sassafras, and Guaiacum officinale /lignum sanctum was controlled by the Fugger Bank House. The other curing methods came from Asia by Arabian medicine: mercury therapy. In that time in Hungary during the Ottoman Empire (1521-1686) the mercury therapy was dispersed. For a long time syphilis was treated with mercury which was administered either orally or topically. The mercury induced heavy salivation, which was thought to remove the humors which caused the illness. It is suspected that the doses of mercury used were close to lethal and also caused symptoms which were similar to the disease. Later the remedies were gold or silver which often made into a solution and the injection was very painful. The mercury (Calomel) was also injected and its poisoning could be as deadly as the disease. All type of the cure of syphilis till more than 450 years was painful, long and with uncertain outcome. In 1909 a new remedy was discovered by Paul Erlich, it was a form of arsenic with a confidence name "magic bullet" hoping to cure. But the result wasn't guaranteed. Not until invention of penicillin was it possible to cure syphilis with one injection, not used for that until 1943.