

The History of Medicine and Its Relationship with Medical Records

TIP TARİHİ VE TIBBİ KAYITLARLA İLGİSİ

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Abstract

Although there have been lots of developments in the field of science, the information is still transferred from past through the future by authentication. Medical sciences can never be excepted.

The History of Medicine began simultaneously with the recording of medical records. It should be noted that the medical records are as valuable for the patients as drugs and treatments are.

Recording the results of his/her studies, a physician can not only show his/her scientific efforts, but can develop the history of medicine as well.

The studies show that, in the field of medicine, whenever the medical authentication has been done precisely and the physicians paid close attention to this factor, the history of medicine is much more glorious. It is somewhat impossible to study the life of those physicians who had studied in this subject, unless they have left behind some records in his respect.

The authors here try to reveal how important the authentication in form of medical records is, and how medical records have accounted for continuation of the history of medicine.

Key Words: Medical Records, History of Medicine, Twentieth century

Türkiye Klinikleri J Med Ethics 2005, 13:199-202

Özet

Bilim alanında birçok gelişme olmakla birlikte, bilgi, hala geçmişten geleceğe doğrulanarak aktarılır. Tıbbi bilimler hiçbir zaman bunun dışında tutulamaz.

Tıp tarihi, tıbbi kayıtların tutulması ile aynı zamanda başladı. Tıbbi kayıtların, hastalar için ilaçlar ve tedaviler kadar değerli olduğundan söz edilebilir.

Hekim, incelemelerinin sonuçlarını kaydederek sadece bilimsel çabalarını göstermekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda tıp tarihini de geliştirebilir.

Çalışmalar, tıp alanında, tıbbi doğrulama titizlikle yapıldığında ve hekimler bu faktöre dikkat ettiklerinde tıp tarihinin çok daha fazla muhteşem olduğunu gösterir. Hekimler bazı kayıtları geride bırakmadıkça, bu konuda çalışma yapmış olanlarının yaşamlarını incelemek olanaksızdır.

Burada yazarlar, tıbbi kayıtlar formunda doğrulamanın ne kadar önemli olduğunu ve tıbbi kayıtların tıp tarihinin devamlılığını nasıl açıkladığı ortaya çıkarmaya çalışırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tıbbi Kayıtlar, Tıp Tarihi, Yirminci Yüzyıl

Through an analysis of the history of the medicine, we can understand that this history has always been parallel to the history of medical record. In other words, both are almost the same age.

There are different ideas of when medicine has come into existence. Some historians believe that medicine was established by Chaldeans and Babylonian diviners. Some others relate this science to the Yemeni magicians or Egyptian diviner. Others take the ancient Greek scientists into

consideration. but the fact is that the discovery of medicine cannot be related to a specific city or era. In any event, reliefs dating back to the Old Stone Age (25000 B.C.) which have been found in the Spanish caves, show drilling the skulls and cutting the fingers.¹

The most important of all the medical pamphlets and essays were written in persia, Babylon, Egypt Indo-China and Greece. These show how old the science of medicine is. These records have been found in form of reliefs, or were written on different papyrus. Even though these essays are completely different from the present-century records, it should be noted that these primary samples paved the way for the progress of medicine in the future time.

The extent of studies in the field of medicine and its manifestation can be almost related to the number of physicians and medical researchers. In his period of practice,

Geliş Tarihi/Received: 16.06.2005

Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 08.07.2005

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Türkiye Klinikleri J Med Ethics 2005, 13

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each doctor has recorded the results of his studies relevant to his patients, in form of medical records, and this has sometimes led to new discoveries. This way, he not only contributed to the extension and the life of medicine, but helped science penetrate into the future era.

In this essay, the authors have briefly paid attention to this history of medicine in viewpoint of the production of medical records. Here you can find the life story of some physicians very briefly, too.

As the authors believe, there should be a direct relationship between the science of medicine and the history of medical records. It may be true that the life of medicine has been extended by means of medical records, and this has led to the production of medical history.

“The Egyptian Period”

The first known Egyptian physician is Imhotep, and Arturo Gastiglioni in his book, “the history of medicine”, says:

“Imhotep was regarded as a God of medicine and was worshipped as a result.”

The Greek used to call him “Imouthes” James Henry Breasted (photo=1), The famous Egyptologist, believes that Imhotep was the author of the Smiths papyrus. Imhotep recorded the results of his studies on a skin roll known as “Smith” which is the most valuable medical record dating back to almost (1600 B.C.). This roll is such known since Edwin Smith discovered it in the 19th century.¹

“The Greek Period”

Medicine was extended and expanded in ancient Greece by Asclepiadia. He cured his patients in Aesculapia temples, and a great number of evidences had been found on the pillars of these temples which reveal the names of patients, a summary of the illness in progress, and the remedial process. These evidences can also be regarded equal to the present medical files.

Aesculapia temples were remedial centers, places for safekeeping the medical files and records, and also a center to recruit many physicians, for centuries. There were almost 200 temples of this kind; Epidour in Cos islands located on the coast of Asia minor, and also in Cnidus and Pergamum. They used to be the most important and the most famous temples of all.

Hippocrates, born in (460 B.C.), like his ancestors got the preliminary information and medical records in Aesculapia. We know him as the first doctor who practiced on a scientific basis and put superstitions away. He founded the medical Oath which is named after him, “Hippocrates”.

Francis Adams (1946) translated a remarkable pamphlet written by Hippocrates, from Greek language,

which had something to do with parturition. Here we read:

“Filinus’s wife gave birth to a baby girl in Tamous. Lochial rubra was quite natural, and everything went all right. After a fortnight she began to suffer from sort of fever and chill. Afterwards she felt an ache around her heart and stomach. Then an ache started in her genital organ while the lochia serosa stopped. Prescribing a suppository, Hippocrates could heal and remove those symptoms, although the patient still suffered from pains around her head and neck, an also insensibility in her arms and legs.”²

Today we know that these symptoms result from streptococcal infection. Hippocrates explained these symptoms very professionally.

Hippocrates has another interesting pamphlet about a chronic fever. Here we read:

“Kelionactidis who lived on the upper-story of Hercules temple developed an irregular fever. First he began to complain about a pain in the left of his head and said that he was run-down. Although the fever attacks were fickle and irregular, and he sometimes broke out in a sweat, those attacks would critically be acute. In the thirtieth day, there was hematuria. Fever and hematuria thus continued.”²

Accuracy and bustlety that Hippocrates used in recording these reports are of great importance. And it must also be noted that these reports date back to 2000 years ago. We are greatly thankful to Hippocrates for his medical reports which have saved for the future doctors to use.

“The Roman Period”

Galen (Photo=3) a Roman physician, who lived in Marcus Aurelius era, about 600 years after Hippocrates, gained fame by curing the emperor (201-213 B.C.). Galen and his many students paid different visits to hospitals and used to go on scientific trips. He based his teaching on reports and the ways to prepare them (perhaps he was the first who recognized the importance and true value of such reports).

“The Byzantine Era” (The Eastern Roman Empire)

Although the Eastern Roman Emperors ruled for thousands of years, the medical records of this period were mostly prepared in the first three centuries of this era. From among the most remarkable physicians in this period we can name Oribasius (400-325 B.C.), Aetius, Alexander, and Paul. While the Roman and Greek civilizations were gradually declining, there was no progress in medicine, either.

Thus no medical records could be found belonging to this period, or at least the physicians failed to leave any

valuable reports. As a results, there was no significant development in medicine in that time.

“The Period of (865-925)”

“Talmud” and “Bible” are the most important sources of medical records of this period. As a matter of fact, “Talmud” contains more medical instructions and information than “Bible”. In “Bible” the attention is mostly paid to prevention. In “leviticus book” there are strict orders of not to touch the unclean and contaminated things, to use clean and proper food, and to clean the women after childbrith (preventive medicine).

At the same time, Razi (photo=4), a great Iranian Physician and scientist, was practicing medicine in a hospital. He left many valuable books on medicine and explained accurately many of infectious diseases and recognized the differenes between smallpox and the measles.^{3,4}

Avicenna (photo 5), anohter Iranian medical genius (980-1037), based his medical compilations on Hippocrates reports. He would compile whatsoever he learnt as an itinerant physician, and this implies how important and undeniable the role of medical records is.

“The Middle Ages”

The records found from this period indicate that the patients had been receiving their treatment since 1137 in St. Bartholomew hospital (the only one having been remained from the Middle Ages in London).

In Sir Norman Moors (photo=6) book, printed from the orginal copy, 28 illnesses and their histories are recorded. In the first report, for instance, we read:

“A woman’s tongue was so swollen that she could hardly keep her mouth closed, and neither could she hid the swelling of her tongue. Her friends took her to the church, and Rayer visited her. He tried to help her sympathetically and with great care. He made an effort to reduce the swelling using a lot of cold water and medicine. That woman left the church happily and healthy.”⁵

“The Renaissance”

During the years (1509-1547) there was a great improvement in the social situation, and St. Bartholomew hospital situation developed as a result. The records found from this period indicate the laws requiring confidentiality of the patients information. In 1667, some efforts were made to establish the first hospital archives.

Andreas Vesalius (photo=7) (1514-1564) from Belgium contributed greatly to anatomy advancement. He is one of those whose recorded whatever they observed or found. He wrote his anatomy pamphlet, “Faabrica”, in 1543 and ultimately became an anatomy professor in Pa-

dua University. This university was the first European higher educational institute where medicine was taught.

Doctor Nicholas Tulp (photo=8) was named as the head of Amsterdam Surgeon Committee in 1632. he then compiled his medical observations in a book which contained hundreds of interesting issues. It is worth noting that in those days, the physicians were self-obliged to recorrd the results of their works and observation for the future doctors to use as reliable references.

“The Seventeenth Century”

The appointment of doctor William Harvey (photo=8) as the head of St. Bartholomew hospital stabilized the doctors responsibilities for what they did. Thus the hpyicians were obliged to record their orders as clearly as possible. In doctors responsibility explanation we read:

“you are accepted as a physician to aid patients in this hospital. Hereby, you should attend the hospital at least one or more days a week, as required, to give the hospital’s manager a helping hand and cure the poods who are in need of medical services and sought shelter here. And I also want you in the holy name of God to make all your efforts to cure the people either here in this hospital or anywhere else you are required to. And if you are to prescribe any kind of medicine, do write its ingredients in a notebook.”²

John Graunt is the first who conducted a statistical survey on mortality rate in 1661. he wrote in his book, “a list of death loss,” as:

“Here you can find a list of shrouding an burial, wedding ceremonies, and baptism.”

This book reveals two facts: first, creditabl and valuable sciences are still transferred to the future generation through written information; second, physicians have discovered the impontance of medical records.

“The Eighteenth Century”

Benjamin Franklin (photo=10) was an American leader of the movement of establishing the General Hospitals. This hospital is now known as Pennsylvania hospital and was founded in 1752. the records and information have been being kept in this hospital from the very early patients. Since 1803, the top managers ordered the compilation of interesting diseases along with their pictures and drawings. In 1771, New York hospital was established. There, the medical records have been being kept since 1793. since 1808, these record have be collected through specific methods which are still commonly in use today.²

“The Nineteenth Century”

In 1821, a public hospital was inaugurated in Boston, Massachusetts. What distinguishes this hospital from the

others, is its complete archives of medical records. The early records in this hospital were written by means of quillpen and ink. Doctor Warren (photo=11) writes about an interesting surgery:

“The operation was carried out at 10:40. the patient was nervous, and we asked for some tranquilizer. He was given tr. Opiixi Gtts twice.”

As a matter of fact, the expressions used here seem somewhat strange, but it shows that doctors insisted on recording the medical records, and thus helped the history of medicine promote.²

“The Twentieth Century”

In 1902, the recording of medical records was put forward for the first time in the American Medical Librarians Session. In 1905, the physicians individually thought of the importance of records, and doctor George Willson (photo=12), from Portland, explained the framework for organizing the clinical records in the sixth session of American Physicians' Council.²

In 1913, by the establishment of American Surgeon's College, doctor Franklin H. Martin (photo=13) announced the principal objective of this newly established society as to promote the standard level of surgery. To obtain this objective, one needs to have precise information about surgery methods conducted in other hospitals and medical universities.

This is not the end of the history of medical life, but this history will continually go on. In other words medicine and medical recording will continue along with the human life.

Conclusion

Medicine is on its way of progress parallel to other sciences. What have helped the promotion of this science is the physicians' records in form of medical records. The following results can be derived from each record (Figure 1):

1- Recording the information of the patients is necessary to be used:

a- for medical investigations and the assessment of clinical care.

b- in legal claims.

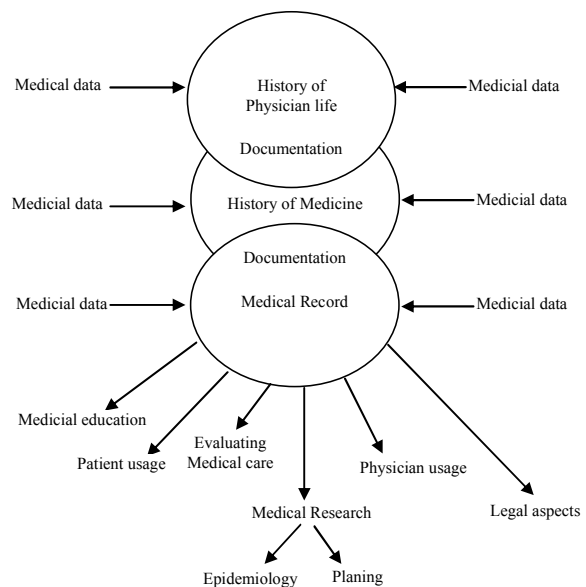


Figure 1.

c- to help to patients continue his cure.

d- by the physician to know what he has previously done.

2- recording the life of a physician. (to keep his name a live)

3- durability of medical history.

In this essay, the authors have attempted to show that medicine owes its progress to the records the physicians have done throughout the history. Each doctor who has more accurately registered his findings and information, has given better inputs for the future investigatory use, and has better recorded the history of medicine.

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