

History and Pathological Evolution of Tuberculosis Infection

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DESCRIPTION

Tuberculosis is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, which has been around for at least 15,000 years. Tuberculosis has been around since the dawn of time. The genus *Mycobacterium* was first discovered in the environment about 150 million years ago, and an early variant of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was discovered in East Africa about 3 million years ago. A growing body of evidence suggests that the current strains of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* descended from a common ancestor between 20,000 and 15,000 years ago. Studies on Egyptian mummies (2400-3400 B.C.) revealed the presence of tuberculosis-related skeletal deformities, such as Pott's deformities. Tuberculosis was first described in India and China around 3300 and 2300 years ago, respectively. Furthermore, tuberculosis was described in the Biblical books using the Hebrew word 'Schachepeth.' The first pre-Columbian evidence of tuberculosis was discovered in Peruvian mummies in the Andean states, indicating the disease's presence in South America prior to European colonisation. Hippocrates described the symptoms of Phthisis in Book I, Of the Epidemics, which are very similar to the common characteristics of tubercular lung lesions.

Clarissimus Galen, a Greek physician who became the physician to Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius in 174 AD, described tuberculosis symptoms as fever, sweating, coughing, and blood-stained sputum. He also proposed that an effective tuberculosis treatment should include fresh air, milk, and soy beverages. Tuberculosis was mentioned by Celso, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, and Caelius Aurelianus in Roman times. However, it went

unnoticed at that time. Following the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, a vast pool of tuberculosis archeologic evidence was discovered throughout Europe, indicating that the disease was widespread in Europe at that time. Scrofula, a disease of the cervical lymph nodes, was described as a new clinical form of tuberculosis in the Middle Ages. In England and France, the disease was dubbed "King's Evil," and there was widespread belief that it could be cured with the "Royal touch." The 'Royal touch' established by English and French kings persisted for several years. Queen Anne was the last British monarch to use this healing method.

Guy de Chauliac, a French surgeon, proposed the first medical treatment for tuberculosis. As a treatment option, he suggested removing the scrofulous gland. Girolamo Fracastoro, an Italian physician, was the first to provide a clear description of tuberculosis' contagious nature in the 16th century. In his book 'Opera Medica,' Francis Sylvius provided the exact pathological and anatomical description of tuberculosis in 1679. In his book 'A new theory of Consumption,' Benjamin Marten, a British physician, described the infectious origin of tuberculosis for the first time in 1720. Tuberculosis was known as 'Consumption' and 'phthisis' in the 17th and 18th centuries. Theophile Laennec, a French physician, identified the pathological signs of tuberculosis in 1819, including consolidation, pleurisy, and pulmonary cavitation. In addition to the respiratory tract, he discovered that *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* can infect the gastrointestinal tract, bones, joints, nervous systems, lymph nodes, genital and urinary tracts, and skin (extra-pulmonary tuberculosis) (pulmonary tuberculosis).

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