

# Historical Geographies of Diabetes and Emotion

gENTRY hANKS

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## **Abstract**

The current focus on heredity and obesity in the discourse surrounding diabetes hasn't always had the lime light. Emotion was once very much considered as part of the etiology of diabetes.

# 1 Major Players

It might be of use to introduce researchers and doctors who have been particularly visible in the world of diabetes focused medicine as well as historians of diabetes. Thomas Willis G. E. Daniels Papaspyros Charles Best Frederick Banting Joslin George Burch

# 2 The Eradication of Emotion

The role of emotion has been seen as more prevalent and important, particularly in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The bulk of research and writing arrived through psychosomatic medicine. Although medical doctors in the past and present acknowledge that emotion plays a role in the course of the illness, exactly how and to what degree has been hotly contested.

While the main focus of medical communities centers on heredity and obesity, a focus on emotion has largely fallen by the wayside, particularly in medical fields that are considered legitimate and are so because of their willingness to neglect the role of emotion. This has created a rift in the treatment of diabetes—maintaining a split between mind and body. It is rare that a physician takes into account the emotional factors in the course of diabetes (among other illnesses). There has been a turn to fix this with bandaids called diabetic educators. The current model of treatment relies on the individual requisitioning a team of doctors and professionals, thereby splitting a person into compartmentalized medical problems based solely on the bodily geographic location of symptoms or secondary problems. This team often consists of a family doctor, an endocrinologist, an ophthalmologist, a nutri-

tionist or dietician, a podiatrist, and a gynecologist (for women). Oddly, although men's sexual and reproductive health is also affected by diabetes, it is almost unheard of that men are approached about these topics outside of written information, let alone encouraged to bring it up at a doctor's visit.