

= Tobacco smoke enema =

The tobacco smoke enema , an insufflation of tobacco smoke into the rectum by enema , was a medical treatment employed by European physicians for a range of ailments .

Tobacco was recognised as a medicine soon after it was first imported from the New World , and tobacco smoke was used by western medical practitioners as a tool against cold and drowsiness , but applying it by enema was a technique adapted from the North American Indians . The procedure was used to treat gut pain , and attempts were often made to resuscitate victims of near drowning . Liquid tobacco enemas were often given to ease the symptoms of a hernia .

During the early 19th century the practice fell into decline , when it was discovered that the principal active agent in tobacco smoke , nicotine , is poisonous .

= = Tobacco in medicine = =

Until its discovery and importation from the New World , tobacco was unknown to western medicine . Europeans were not ignorant of the effects of smoke ; incense has been used since antiquity , and the psychoactive effects of burning hemp seed was well known by the Scythians and Thracians . The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates recommended the inhalation of smoke for " female diseases " as did Pliny the Elder , as a cure for coughs . The Native Americans from whom the first western explorers learnt about tobacco used the leaf for a variety of purposes , including religious worship , but Europeans soon became aware that the Americans also used tobacco for medicinal purposes . The French diplomat Jean Nicot used a tobacco poultice as an analgesic , and Nicolás Monardes advocated tobacco as a treatment for a long list of diseases , such as cancer , headaches , respiratory problems , stomach cramps , gout , intestinal worms and female diseases . Contemporaneous medical science placed much weight on humorism , and for a short period tobacco became a panacea . Its use was mentioned in pharmacopoeia as a tool against cold and somnolence brought on by particular medical afflictions , its effectiveness explained by its ability to soak up moisture , to warm parts of the body , and to therefore maintain the equilibrium so important to a healthy person . In an attempt to discourage disease tobacco was also used to fumigate buildings .

The stimulation of respiration through the introduction of tobacco smoke by a rectal tube was first practiced by the North American Indians . An early example of the use of this procedure was described in 1686 by Thomas Sydenham , who to cure iliac passion prescribed first bleeding , followed by a tobacco smoke enema :

Here , therefore , I conceive it most proper to bleed first in the arm , and an hour or two afterwards to throw up a strong purging glyster ; and I know of none so strong and effectual as the smoke of tobacco , forced up through a large bladder into the bowels by an inverted pipe , which may be repeated after a short interval , if the former , by giving a stool , does not open a passage downwards .

Tobacco smoke enemas were also reportedly used by 19th @-@ century Danish farmers , for horses that needed laxatives , and the US anthropologist Frank Speck reported that contemporary Catawba Native Americans also treated their horses using the technique .

= = Medical opinion = =

To physicians of the time , the appropriate treatment for " apparent death " was warmth and stimulation . Anne Greene , a woman sentenced to death and hanged in 1650 for the supposed murder of her stillborn child , was found by anatomists to be still alive . They revived her by pouring hot cordial down her throat , rubbing her limbs and extremities , bleeding her , applying heating plasters and a " heating odoriferous Clyster to be cast up in her body , to give heat and warmth to her bowels . " After placing her in a warm bed with another woman , to keep her warm , she recovered fully and was pardoned . Artificial respiration and the blowing of smoke into the lungs or the rectum were thought to be interchangeably useful , but the smoke enema was considered the

most potent method , due to its supposed warming and stimulating properties . The Dutch experimented with methods of inflating the lungs , as a treatment for those who had fallen into their canals and apparently drowned . Patients were also given rectal infusions of tobacco smoke , as a respiratory stimulant . Richard Mead was among the first Western scholars to recommend tobacco smoke enemas to resuscitate victims of drowning , when in 1745 he recommended tobacco glysters to treat iatrogenic drowning caused by immersion therapy . His name was cited in one of the earliest documented cases of resuscitation by rectally applied tobacco smoke , from 1746 , when a seemingly drowned woman was treated . On the advice of a passing sailor , the woman 's husband inserted the stem of the sailor 's pipe into her rectum , covered the bowl with a piece of perforated paper , and " blew hard " . The woman was apparently revived . In the 1780s the Royal Humane Society installed resuscitation kits , including smoke enemas , at various points along the River Thames , and by the turn of the 19th century , tobacco smoke enemas had become an established practice in Western medicine , considered by Humane Societies to be as important as artificial respiration .

" Tobacco glyster , breath and bleed .

Keep warm and rub till you succeed .

And spare no pains for what you do ;

May one day be repaid to you . "

By 1805 , the use of rectally applied tobacco smoke was so established as a way to treat obstinate constrictions of the alimentary canal that doctors began experimenting with other delivery mechanisms . In one experiment , a decoction of half a drachm of tobacco in four ounces of water was used as an enema in a patient suffering from general convulsion where there was no expected recovery . The decoction worked as a powerful agent to penetrate and " roused the sensibility " of the patient to end the convulsions , although the decoction resulted in excited sickness , vomiting , and profuse perspiration . Such enemas were often used to treat hernias . A middle @-@ aged man was reported in 1843 to have died following an application , performed to treat a strangulated hernia , and in a similar case in 1847 a woman was given a liquid tobacco enema , supplemented with a chicken broth enema , and pills of opium and calomel (taken orally) . The woman later recovered .

In 1811 , a medical writer noted that " [t] he powers of the Tobacco Enema are so remarkable , that they have arrested the attention of practitioners in a remarkable manner . Of the effects and the method of exhibiting the smoke of Tobacco per anum , much has been written " , providing a list of European publications on the subject . Smoke enemas were also used to treat various other afflictions . An 1827 report in a medical journal tells of a woman treated for constipation with repeated smoke enemas , with little apparent success . According to a report of 1835 , tobacco enemas were used successfully to treat cholera " in the stage of collapse " .

I may observe , that before I was called to this case , stercoraceous vomiting had decidedly set in . My object in ordering the tobacco infusion and smoke enemata was to favour the reduction of any obscure hernia or muscular spasm of the bowel which might exist . I also directed that the attendants of the girl should , after she had taken the crude mercury , frequently raise her up in bed , (she was too feeble to raise herself ,) to alter her position from one side to the other , from the back to the belly , and vice versa , with the view of favouring the gravitation of the mercury to the lower bowels .

= = Decline = =

Attacks on the theories surrounding the ability of tobacco to cure diseases had begun early in the 17th century . King James I was scathing of its effectiveness , writing " [it] will not deigne to cure heere any other than cleanly and gentlemanly diseases . " Others claimed that smoking dried out the humours , that snuff made the brain sooty , and that old people should not smoke as they were naturally dried up anyway .

While certain beliefs regarding the effectiveness of tobacco smoke to protect against disease persisted until well into the 20th century , the use of smoke enemas in Western medicine declined after 1811 , when through animal experimentation Benjamin Brodie demonstrated that nicotine ? the

principal active agent in tobacco smoke ? is a cardiac poison that can stop the circulation of blood .