

ITC5 - 2020 - June 3-4, 2020

The Impact of Technological Change:

Technology and the Patient Consumer



The patient is increasingly defined as an active participant in the development of new technologies in medicine, often in the role of a consumer. This event will look at the role of both the patient consumer and the healthcare provider in driving this technological evolution to obtain optimal patient outcomes.

Call for Abstracts

McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Recent work in the history of medicine has focused on both technology in medicine and patients as consumers. Schlich/Crenner (2017), for example, have looked at meanings and mechanisms of technological change in surgery, while Alex Mold (2015) and Nancy Tomes (2016) have explored major changes in how patients seek medical information and treatment in U.S. and British healthcare since the late nineteenth century. Such works demonstrate the broad variety of possibilities encompassed by the category of “patient consumer” and various ways of investigating technology in medicine. They also suggest a number of intersecting questions and approaches for historians of science, medicine, and technology.

This workshop aims to bring together these fields of inquiry to explore how patient consumers have influenced technology in medicine. It queries how patients have chosen between different diagnostic and therapeutic technologies (procedures, devices, substances, etc.), how they have rejected or appropriated them, and how they have prompted or supported their development and use from the late nineteenth century to the present. In addition to tracing regional and temporal variations, the workshop will consider how critical differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability have shaped patients' relationships to medical technologies and consumerism. Situating this history in the many places where patients appear—including, but not limited to, domestic and clinical spaces—we draw upon the broader tools available in the history of science, medicine, and technology, and science and technology studies.

Abstracts should be 300 words, with a title, name and institutional affiliation, include three keywords to describe your proposed paper. Presentations will be 25 minutes in length, with time for Q&A, over a two-day workshop in Montreal. Funding requests are in progress to help defray travel costs for national and international participating scholars.

Please send submissions with an updated CV to conf2020@mcgill.ca by November 1, 2019, 5:00pm, EST. We will reply by December 20, 2019.