**"Religious Foundations in Medicine: Historical Insights and Ethical Perspectives"**

**Manjesh Gupta1, Sujeet Pratap Singh2, Pramod Mishra3, Tarkeshwar Prasad Shukla4**

1, 2, 3 &4 Department of Pharmacy SCPM College of Pharmacy, Gonda, U.P., India

***1******guptamanjesh883@gmail.com***

***2******singhsujeet0068@gmail.com*** ***3******pramoddmishra000@gmail.com*** ***4******tk007.shukla@gmail.com***

**Abstract**

The ever-monumental role of religion in history as well as the practice of medicine intertwines spiritual beliefs, ethical frameworks, and healthcare delivery. This review examines the everlasting effects of the religious institution in medical practice, from the preservation of ancient knowledge to the present day as they contribute to person-to-person health care systems.In early medieval Europe, monastic communities kept intact classical texts from Hippocrates and Galen for centuries to come. They simultaneously continued at the same time as Islamic scholars that integrated Greek, Persian, and Indian medicine into a broader and holistic picture of healthcare-think "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad. To that extent, mind-body-spirit healed through Hinduism and Buddhism and has aligned with traditional Chinese medicine, which is derived from Daoist and Confucian doctrines. Religious institutions had also established hospitals that would minister spiritual care in addition to medical treatment. Monasteries in Europe served as infirmaries-initially inspired by Christian ideals of charity. Islamic bimaristans, established on waqf endowments, opened to serve as academic hospitals with libraries and teaching rooms for the benefit of students. In addition, ethical principles rooted in religious teachings shaped medical ethics, emphasizing the sanctity of life, compassion, and the duty to care for the sick.In modern healthcare scenarios, religious institutions effect change through faith-based hospitals or community programs, but conflicting roles also arise, especially in reproductive and genetic sciences. This review summarizes the past and present contributions of religious institutions in preserving knowledge, providing care, and participating in the development of ethical medical practices.

Keyword : Medical Knowledge , Alternative Medicine , Hippocrates , Monasteries ,Chinese

**Introduction**

Historically, religion was the most important thing in medicine; all the medical associated divine interventions. All religions have integrated their beliefs and religious guidelines with health practices and healing. All religions believe that they are intrinsically connected, religious beliefs and spiritual well-being, and therefore these groups are channels for information about anatomy and physiology and the establishment of codes of ethics and care-giving. In antiquity and early medieval times, temples, monasteries, and other establishments were able to provide assurances of healing, education, and keeping medical knowledge. Monastic traditions in medieval Europe preserve the works of classical Greek and Roman physicians such as Hippocrates and Galen as still in existence today: as the link through time [1,2].Simultaneously, Islamic scholars enriched medical knowledge by translating, assimilating, and extending old Greek, Persian, and Indian medical texts, thus putting together a harmonious system of healthcare[3]..Ethical constructs were conditioned by religious principles to form the basis of medical practices. . Whereas Christianity emphasized compassion and care to hospitalize the starving misfortunate hence have led to the founding of charitable hospitals in Europe[4]..Islamic medicine includes lots of spiritual and ethical aspects to practical medicine as demonstrated by the establishment of bimaristans or hospitals funded by endowed charity[5].. Like these traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism also propagated a complete approach of mind-body-spirit healing[6]..Religious institutions have still a say in medical practice even today-in faith-based hospitals, hospice care, and community health programs. These institutions reach underserved communities whilst blending spiritual values with modern advancement of medicine. However, conflicts still arise in some areas when it comes to reproductive and genetic sciences; mostly between science and religious beliefs[7,8].It discusses the religious institutions' past and contemporary alerts in medical practice; it would also like to look into how these institutions have contributed to the sponsorship of knowledge in the preservation of health and health delivery, plus the ethical issues that such institutions have to deal within the modern era.

1. **Religious Institutions as Custodians of Medical Knowledge**
2. **Preservation of Old Writings in Europe**
* **Libraries and Scriptoriums in Monasteries:**

Monasteries became the centers for the preservation of knowledge in what was generally referred to as the "Dark Ages," or early medieval times. Monks copied with great accuracy classical medical texts such as those of Hippocrates, Galen, and Dioscorides. These texts, written in Greek and Latin, are preserved in monastic scriptoriums and remain the groundwork for medical training in Europe.For instance: Benedictine Rule encourages monks to study and be literate so that texts would be kept for their community's benefit[1,9].

* **Latin Translations:**

The works of Ancient Greece and Rome were turned into Latin so that European scholars could read them. The Etymologiae by Isidore of Seville (7th century), for instance, served as an encyclopedia that integrated the entire store of ancient medical and scientific knowledge into one single book[10]

1. **. Islamic World as the Hub Where Knowledge Diseminated**
* **Bayt al-Hikma:**

The House of Wisdom in Baghdad formed one of the most credible centers during the Islamic Golden Age for translating and keeping ancient medical texts. Outside the works which he translated from Hippocrates and Galen, Hunayn ibn Ishaq had incorporated into his translations a wealth of Persian and Indian medical texts as well[11,12].Example: Hunayn ibn Ishaq translated a bit over a hundred medical treatises to throw knowledge into so many shores to the Islamic scholar of Europe.

* **Integration of Traditions:**

Islamic scholars built on Greek, Roman, and Indian medical discourses. They hated, improved, and adapted the old theories to fit their need for the time. Al-Razi (Rhazes) and Avicenna constructed a great part of these by summarizing extensive medical works, such as Kitab al-Hawi and The Canon of Medicine[13,14].

1. **Other Cultures' Healing Practices and Healing Texts**
* **The Hindu and Buddhist Tradition:**

In India, Ayurvedic texts such as the Charaka Samhita and the Sushruta Samhita continued to document ayurvedic knowledge. Buddhist monasteries throughout Asia became libraries and healing centers for medical texts[15,16].

* **Traditional Chinese Medicine:**

Daoist and Confucian doctrines keep transforming TCM in medieval time. Most prominent texts such as Huangdi Neijing were safely stored in the libraries of temples so essential works could transcend tim[17,18].

1. **Healthcare Provision by Religious Institutions**
2. **Monastic Medicine in Europe**
* **Role of Monasteries:**

In the early medieval period, monasteries transformed into healing and caregiving centres. Inspired by the Christian exhortations of compassion and charity, monks came to their sick as medicine from their community.

* **The Rule of St. Benedict:**

 This primal source makes monks regard care of the sick as service to Christ himself. Hence, it was motivating to build infirmaries in monasteries for which the monks sought to cure both monks and non-monks[19,20].

* **Preservation of Medical Knowledge:**

Monastic communities preserved and translated ancient medical texts such as those of Galen and Hippocrates, which informed their medical practice. This knowledge played a role in shaping early European medicine[21].

1. **Religious Hospitals in History**

**The Rise of Hospitals**

The very first hospitals were built by religious institutions for the organized care of sick, poor, and pilgrims. These hospitals provided both spiritual and medical care, thus coalescing into a total healing for body and spirit. Well-Known Examples:

* **Hôtel-Dieu, Paris(in646):**

This would become an example to future institutions, founded by the Catholic Church to give care free of charge to its needy[22].

* **St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London (Inaugurated in 1123 A.D.):**

 This is the oldest operating hospital today, founded by the monks of St. Augustine [23].

* **Knights Hospitals:**

Established hospitals throughout Europe and Middle East, especially during wars waged by Crusaders to provide care for soldiers and civilians[24].

* **Charity and Non-discrimination:**

Most religious hospitals put strong emphasis on providing services to all, irrespective of social and economic status. The idea of free healthcare was strongly rooted in the Christian ethos of charity and Islamic zakat (almsgiving) as well [25,26].

1. **Islamic Waqf and Bimaristans**

**Bimaristans (Hospitals):**

It was the Islamic world that produced this sophisticated hospital known as bipartisan. Hospitals are predominantly built on waqf for charitable purposes. There is usually a principle that says that anyone who needs any medical service should be free to make use of the hospital service.Examples:Hospitals established in East Baghdad in the 10th century had wards for various diseases. Such was the name of comprehensive care that the hospital offered services from different disease areas[27].The features of the Nuri Hospital, which was built in Damascus in the 12th century, include a library and teaching facilities, and therefore it is the first of all modern academic hospitals[28].Integration of Medical Knowledge: The Islamic hospitals included knowledge from Greek, Roman, Persian, and Indian traditions for a complete looking after it. These gave prominence to cleanliness and food concerned with health and psychological well-being[29].

1. **Ethical Frameworks Rooted in Religious Teachings**
2. **Christian Medical Ethics**

Christianity has historically formed a solid foundation for Western medical ethics. Important aspects include the sanctity of life, charity, and duty towards care of the sick.

* **Sanctity of Life:**

The commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," (Exodus 20:13) serves as the basis of this principle in that it states that all human life is inherently valuable. Throughout history, this viewpoint has opposed minimization of the lives of others by such practices as euthanasia and abortion[30,31]

* **Charity and Compassion**:

This is manifest in the words of Jesus Christ who inspired caregiving in spiritual terms, setting the tone for hospitals founded on these principles by church orders, such as that of the Sisters of Charity[32,33].

* **Healing as Ministry:**

Early Christians considered medical care as part of ministry, combining prayer and treatment. This spiritual dimension, viewed as helping and healing services, still exists in hospice and palliative care services presided over by Christian organizations [34].

**Conclusion and Discussion**

Religions have been at the center of the activity of medicine and shaping its future. They have kept and enhanced knowledge, founded hospitals, and given ethical guidance for their activity. The vast contributions of those institutes go from keeping ancient texts on medicine to appropriately establishing hospitals and ethical frameworks. These institutes preserved the medical heritage from civilizations but also disseminated it and enabled progress within its ritual continuity to fill the various gaps that opened in cultural and geographical terms. Their reach into healthcare provision, however significant, has been impacted by changes in contemporary medicine. Most religious hospitals and other community health programs do provide excellent service delivery in marginalized areas. These advances have left the line of friction concerning artificial reproductive technologies, stem cellular research, and genetic engineering with doctrines of faith. The gap that exists in controversy reveals the importance of a balanced dialect between religious tradition and the ever engrossing modern science of harmony within ethical bounds.Religious ethics greatly influence caregiving philosophies. Ideas of compassion, charity, and sanctity of life run through and are shared across Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, demonstrating that such values are universal. Infusing spiritual and ethical principles into practice has also ensured a wide contribution to the holistic healing approach by which physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is addressed. Religious institutions have always played a key role in shaping the global environments for creating and delivering medicine. They have kept ancient medical treatises and built hospitals, given ethical frameworks, marketed bespoke holistic cures by keeping all those ancient treasures safe and taking them as custodians and champions of the bedridden. The extensions of such legacies are clear in faith-based farms, hospices, or even community outreach programs that promote the infusion of spiritual values into modern-day medical progress.But the relationship between religious institutions and the medical profession is complicated. In modern times, even science call most traditional religion beliefs into questions, necessitating dialogue and ways to compromise. Thus, such mutual understanding can lead to collaborative efforts by the religious bodies and the medical profession to address healthcare concerns related to ethics.Therefore, a minister still plays an important role in health practice by maintaining ethical and compassionate traditions while adapting to modern medicine. They highlight the need for spiritual and moral values in medical practice so that advances in medicine strive to serve humanity.

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