

## **I4. Histories and Ethics of Medical Photography**

**I4:1** Brynne McBryde, *Photographic Manipulation and the Shaping of the Medical Record*

Medical photographs, with their clinical intent and mechanical process, carry a great deal of weight as medical records. In the nineteenth century, however, a large number of medical photographs, in line with common photographic processes at the time, were manipulated, sometimes dramatically altering the bodies they depict. These manipulated images promote myths about the human body that limit our understandings of what it can and should be. This paper examines a series of photographs from the Photographic Review of Paris Hospitals, a journal published with support from the French government between 1868 and 1876, some manipulated and some not. Taken together, the photographs reveal a complex landscape in which reality blends into medical fiction creating a tangled documentary record that is difficult to fully accept or dismiss today.

This entanglement reveals a preoccupation with defining difference in nineteenth century medical practice that shaped the processes and records of the field but is often erased or treated as separable today. The institutional history of the Photographic Review of Paris Hospitals, however, reveals how deeply enmeshed these fictions remain. The journal is housed across the world in libraries of medical history. Despite its inclusion of unique prints, some hand colored, it is rarely situated in an art or photographic collection and, with the exception of the eighth and final volume, infrequently in rare books collections. This cataloguing decision has largely shielded the photographs from scrutiny by scholars trained in image analysis and photographic processes. Instead, the manipulated bodies in the Review's pages now exist in a context that divorces them from the skepticism that their history demands and they have persisted in the literature as medical records that document actual conditions and actual bodies.

### Learning Outcomes

- Develop knowledge and understanding of professional behaviors and values
- Understand the dynamic history of medical ideas and practices, their implications for patients and health care providers, and the need for lifelong learning by examining how differences in perceptions of objectivity across time can lead to misperception and misunderstanding.
- Contribute to the improvement of patient care
- Develop an historically informed sensitivity to the diversity of patients (including appreciation of class, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, cultural, spiritual orientations) by better understanding the subtle ways in which that diversity has been erased from the medical record

#### **I4:2** Christine Slobogin, *Feminized Anonymity: Gender and Privacy in Patient Photographs*

Today, patient privacy is one of the most well established and tightly held ethical cornerstones in the practice of medicine. It is considered paramount to retain confidentiality, to protect a patient's identity, and to obtain informed consent whenever patient information might be shared or published; this is the case both in relation to patients' written protected health information like their Social Security Number, name, or age, and in relation to patients' visual protected health information, such as clinical photographs.

Physicians' and publishers' inconsistent attention to this now-obvious ethical imperative for patient privacy can be made visible by tracking the anonymization tactics and trends in photographs in medical publications in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within this wider visual history of anonymity, this talk homes in on the ways in which anonymizing tactics were feminized in these publications. Almost immediately after its invention, photography was being used in medical spheres to create patient images, and various tools for anonymizing patients (such as the black bar over the eyes, the hood over the head, etc.) started to appear by the end of the nineteenth century. Female patients were anonymized in different ways and with different frequency than their male counterparts. They also seemed to choose their anonymization tactics themselves, by covering their eyes or their faces with fans, lace, and their own hands. While it is nearly impossible to know why and how certain patients were granted anonymity while others were not, this paper examines the possible ethical negotiations that took place in hospital photographic departments during this period, particularly as related to female-presenting patients.

The questions of if, how, and when to grant patients of the past their privacy are still being debated amongst historians of medical photography and of medicine more generally. The discussion of whether the women in these photographs were being presented as feminized, anonymized specimen or if they were asserting their own personhood through their choice of anonymizing tactic can help to nuance this historical and present-day debate about the privacy of patients from the past.

#### Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this activity, the learner will recognize the dynamic interrelationship between medicine and society (particularly a society suffused with images) through history.
- By the end of this activity, the learner will be able to critically appraise clinical management of patients and their photographs from a historical perspective, particularly as related to anonymization.
- By the end of this activity, the learner will have developed an historically informed sensitivity to the diversity of patients, particularly in relation to gender and sex.

### **I4:3** Kathleen Pierce, *Photographing the Animal Research Subject*

Immediately following its 1886 founding, the physicians, researchers, and administrators at the Institut Pasteur in Paris began developing organizational structures to expand the institution's influence. These efforts included establishing satellite institutions both within and without the French empire, as well as the founding of a house journal, the *Annales de l'Institut Pasteur*. Between 1898 and 1910, the *Annales* reproduced at least sixteen photographs of simian research subjects alongside its scientific articles. For the *Annales*, this comprised a veritable deluge: few other animals seemed to warrant such frequent illustration. What's more, many of these photographs represent the researcher's hand propping up, posing, stroking, or violently restraining simian bodies—an unusual phenomenon in turn-of-the-century scientific images.

This paper centers the alternately sentimental and violent gestures captured within these evidentiary images and circulated among researchers by this increasingly authoritative journal as a productive site for interrogate the shifting role of photography as an instrument of power, scientific knowing, and affect. I ground this analysis in cultural and scientific understandings of apes and monkeys, particularly within the context of experimental medicine. The laboratory setting simultaneously demanded monkeys' physiological and morphological closeness to human beings to validate research while necessarily repressing this knowledge to justify inhumane living conditions and procedures. At the same time, material links between imperialism and experimental medicine—namely the sourcing of non-human primates in colonial French Africa and south Asia—exacerbates this ambivalence, folding in racist scientific, medical, and evolutionary discourses about the imbrication of civilization, race, animality, and power. Through close looking at these photographs and attention to their circulation within the *Annales*, I flesh out the ways photographic visualizations of simian subjects disclose fears of an excessive and resisting subject, one that threatened to rupture boundaries of species, race, knowledge, and control.

#### Learning Outcomes

- Recognize the dynamic interrelationship between medicine and society through history
- Develop an historically informed sensitivity to the diversity of patients (including appreciation of class, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, cultural, spiritual orientations)
- Understand the deep-seated relationships between visualization, seeing, and knowing that have permeated medical knowledge production, and be more equipped to grapple with the role of vision and visibility in medical practice