

**A DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM:
DOCTORS AND PATIENTS IN SEVENTEENTH-
CENTURY ENGLAND**

by

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Declaration

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Abstract

Throughout the social history of medicine, explorations of the doctor-patient relationship have often utilised the framework of power relations. Consequently, early modern patients tend to be depicted as more powerful than their modern counterparts. This was because early modern patients were seen to choose their doctors from a conceptual medical marketplace, subjugate them through an entrenched system of patronage, and argue over treatments within a medical culture that barely distinguished between lay and professional medicine. The language of power, however, has served to place early modern doctors and patients in an oppositional stance, thus portraying the relationship as competitive and adversarial. Rather than interpreting patient agency as a signifier of individual power, this thesis uses research in the field of power relations to develop a new conceptualisation of power, to better understand the behaviour of actors within the early modern medical setting. Doctors and patients were both subject to multiplex, multilayered and often hidden socio-relational forces that determined the processes of medical decision-making. Understanding how networks of power operated can reveal the existence of alliances, collaborations, friendships and mutual reciprocity between doctors and patients. The contribution the thesis makes to the scholarly field, therefore, is to offer the guiding principle of a *medical dynamic-equilibrium*. This terminology more aptly conveys the complexities of early modern medical relationships, in which socio-relational forces constantly influenced participants and shifted power in unexpected ways that delivered dynamic outcomes. The thesis explores early modern attitudes towards illness and cure, and considers the role of the doctor at the deathbed and the management of chronic disease.

Abbreviations & Notes

BL	British Library, London
Bodl	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BSL	Barr Smith Library, Adelaide
EEBO	<i>Early English Books Online</i> Chadwyck-Healey. http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic</i>
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LRO	Lancashire Record Office, Preston
OBP	<i>Old Bailey Proceedings</i> Tim Hitchcock et al., <i>The Old Bailey Proceedings Online 1674-1913</i> www.oldbaileyonline.org
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
RCP	Royal College of Physicians, London
WL	Wellcome Library, London

The *Annals* of the Royal College of Physicians were mainly accessed via microfiche (Reading: Adam Matthew Publications, 1991) at the Barr-Smith Library, University of Adelaide. Accordingly, they are cited using microfiche card and image number, and original date of entry.

Contemporary spellings in quotations have been preserved.

For the sake of clarity, dates have been altered to begin the new year on 1 January.

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