

## **Development of Preventive Paediatrics and Child Health 1700-1900 AD**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study of Diseases of Children has been known since ancient history. From 1500 to 1700 AD was a transition from Ancient to modern medicine. The period that followed, namely 1700 to 1900 AD saw the birth of modern medicine and paediatrics and effective methods of disease prevention.

With the onset of the Industrial Revolution, the high rise of urban communities in large cities, the Child became the focus of attention to reduce waste of human life in infancy and childhood through a Humanist movement. In England it started by the establishing of Foundling Hospitals, Dispensaries for the Infant Poor, and later in the second half of the eighteenth century, the building of large city hospitals.

The great advances that followed both in preventing the spread of contagious disease and the rise of new sciences of Bacteriology, Pathology and Histology were made during the nineteenth century against a background of Enlightenment, Revolution, Napoleonic wars, the rise of Nationalism in Europe, Mercantile and Imperialist expansion.

The second half of the nineteenth century also saw important developments in public health sanitation and trials with new methods of infant nutrition. The discovery of Chromosomes in the cell nucleus, and the rediscovery of Mendel's Garden experiments with interbreeding towards the end of the 1800's laid the foundations of Genetics.

All this and more will be reviewed in relation to preventing disease in childhood up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Paediatrics as a specialty had been firmly established.

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