



HISTORY

Charles Richard de Beauregard and the treatment of blennorrhagic urethral stenosis in Madrid in the 18th century: Advertising, secrecy and deception[☆]



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KEYWORDS

Beauregard;
Bougies;
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Abstract

Objectives: Describe the introduction of the treatment for blennorrhagic urethral stenosis in the city of Madrid in the 18th century by the French surgeon Charles de Beauregard, the formulations employed in the preparation of his personal «bougies», the advertising in the press, their marketing and distribution.

Material and methods: Nonsystematic review of the Madrid newspaper *Gaceta de Madrid y Diario curioso, erudito, económico y comercial* (Madrid Gazette, curious, erudite, financial and commercial) between 1759 and 1790. Review of the medical literature of the 18th century preserved in the *Fondo Antigo* of the *Biblioteca Histórica* of *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Historical Resource of the Historical Library of the Complutense University of Madrid). A Google search of «Charles Richard de Beauregard».

Results: Charles de Beauregard focused his professional work mainly on the treatment of the urethral sequela of blennorrhagia, phimosis and paraphimosis. He introduced to 18th century Spanish society (with purported originality and clear commercial interests) therapeutic methods based on lead acetate that had already been developed in France by Thomas Goulard.

Conclusions: The urethral sequela of diseases such as blennorrhagic urethritis, stenotic phimosis and paraphimosis were highly prevalent in 18th century Madrid and required complex solutions for the practice of urology of that era. Charles de Beauregard introduced innovative but not original treatments that were invasive but not bloody and that provided him with fame and social prestige. He advertised his professional activity and marketed his therapeutic products through advertisements submitted to the daily press (*Madrid Gazette*, *Gaceta de Madrid*).

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Beauregard;
Candelillas;
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Carlos Richard de Beauregard y el tratamiento de la estenosis uretral blenorragica en el Madrid del siglo XVIII: publicidad, secreto e impostura

Resumen

Objetivos: Describir la introducción del tratamiento de la estenosis uretral blenorragica en la ciudad de Madrid en el siglo XVIII por el cirujano francés Charles de Beauregard, las formulaciones empleadas en la elaboración de sus personales «candelillas», la publicidad en prensa, su comercialización y distribución.

Material y métodos: Revisión no sistemática de la prensa madrileña *Gaceta de Madrid* y *Diario curioso, erudito, económico y comercial*, entre 1759 y 1790. Revisión de la bibliografía médica del siglo XVIII conservada en el Fondo Antigo de la Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense (Madrid). Búsqueda en portal Google "Carlos Richard de Beauregard".

Resultados: Charles de Beauregard dedicó preferentemente su actividad profesional al tratamiento de las secuelas uretrales de la blenorragia, fimosis y parafimosis, introduciendo en la sociedad española del siglo XVIII, con pretendida originalidad y manifiesto interés comercial, métodos terapéuticos basados en el acetato de plomo, que ya habían sido desarrollados en Francia por Thomas Goulard.

Conclusiones: Las secuelas uretrales de enfermedades como la uretritis blenorragica, la fimosis estenótica o la parafimosis eran muy prevalentes, y de compleja solución para la urología de la época en el Madrid del siglo XVIII. Charles de Beauregard introdujo novedosos tratamientos (pero no originales), invasivos pero no cruentos, alcanzando fama y prestigio social, recurriendo a publicitar su actividad profesional y comercializar los productos terapéuticos que elaboraba mediante anuncios remitidos a la prensa periódica (*Gaceta de Madrid*).

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Introduction

Carlos Richard Beauregard, French surgeon established in Madrid between 1759 and 1786, achieved fame and professional reputation for his dedication to the treatment of blennorrhagic urethritis. Applying therapy based on acetate that the surgeon Thomas Goulard had begun years before, designed, and manufactured his "small candles", urethral dilators made of wax, "Saturn extract", and thin fabric. He publicized the exercise of his activity, he obtained license to manufacture, commercialize, and send them by mail, seeing himself in the need to warn the public of the outbreak of impostors and the appearance of manufacturers of fake small candles.

Material and methods

Non-systematic review of the press *Gaceta de Madrid* y *Diario curioso, erudito, económico y comercial*, between 1759 and 1790. Review of the literature of the eighteenth century preserved in the Old Fund of the Historical Library of the Complutense University (Madrid). Search in Google "Carlos Richard de Beauregard".

Review of the literature of the eighteenth century preserved in the Old Fund of the Historical Library of the Complutense University (Madrid). Search in Google "Carlos Richard de Beauregard".

Results

Carlos Richard Beauregard, of French nationality, studied Medicine and Surgery in his country, moving to Spain around 1759 where he successfully defended his title in the Proto-Medicato Court of Madrid.

He devoted his professional career to the treatment of urethral effects of gonorrhea, of phimosis, and of paraphimosis. However, his therapeutic method was not original, but the application of therapy with lead acetate that the surgeon Thomas Goulard (1697–1784) had reported, a contemporary of surgeon Jacobo Darán (1701–1784), also producer of "small candles", without which philosopher Juan Jacobo Rousseau could not spend one day.¹ Beauregard introduced them in Spain keeping their formulation secret.

On the other hand, urological texts by Goulard² were not known in Spain when Beauregard was established, as the first translation of his *Mémoire* (1746) was in 1768, when Catalan surgeon Antonio Segarra translated it³ into Spanish.

Two years earlier, Beauregard had published his *Disertación* (1766), without reference to Goulard or the "extract of Saturn", but it would be a professor of theology, Vicente Ferrer Gorraiz, who would unveil the "secrets" of Beauregard, author of a practical text⁴ directed to "village surgeons and people who lack a bad barber"⁵ in which he summarizes the therapy of Goulard and in whose prolog he indicates that Antonio Segarra translated that *Memoria* (by Goulard) in 1758, "but as it was Catalan, he put the translation in his language".

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