

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0887-7963(17)30095-0
DOI: doi: [10.1016/j.tmr.2017.09.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmr.2017.09.003)
Reference: YTMRV 50525

To appear in: *Transfusion Medicine Reviews*



Please cite this article as: Marinozzi Silvia, Gazzaniga Valentina, Iorio Silvia, The earliest blood transfusions in 17th century in Italy (1667–1668), *Transfusion Medicine Reviews* (2017), doi: [10.1016/j.tmr.2017.09.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmr.2017.09.003)

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The earliest blood transfusions in 17th century in Italy (1667-1668)

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Abstract

Historical accounts of the earliest experiments in blood transfusion celebrate work done in France and England in 1667-1668. Less attention has been given to pioneering experiments conducted at the same period in Italy. We review records of the first blood transfusion experiments conducted in 17th century Italy. Using original source documents, we provide details of early experiments focusing on the identity of early researchers, their instruments, and techniques. Accounts of the period describe animal-to-animal, animal-to-human, and human-to-human transfusions. We highlight how transfusion was considered a new form of emergency surgery, carried out in order to save patients who could not be cured with traditional therapy of the time.

Keywords: origins of blood transfusion in Italy; methods, tools, and techniques used by Italian surgeons to perform transfusion; Italian literature on transfusion in the 17th century.

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