Louis Palacios

Museum of Southern History

Freshman

The Medical Steel Syringe

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Throughout history, the innovation of medical equipment has had an influence on humanity. In early centuries, medical tools had a probability of transmitting dangerous diseases into living hosts. Many syringes, including steel syringes, have different characteristics that other syringes may not contain. Some of the qualifications that syringes have are the variety of material that is used to build the syringe as well as the different types of needles. Overall, the insight views about the steel syringe are the physical appearance, historical background, and the appreciation of medical technology as an artifact in the southern history museum.

Describing the characteristics of a steel syringe is one way to describe it as an artifact in the medical field. In a book called *Dominique Anel and the Small Lachrymal Syringe: Medical History*, Price, John stated that “the materials used for pipe construction have always remained soft metal to avoid risk of damage” (350). When a patient is receiving medication through a syringe it is most important that the syringe does not prevent an injury to the person who is in control of the syringe and the individual who is being injected with medication. In this case, the main material of the syringe is made from a durable material to remove or introduce a substance to a patient. Additionally, steel syringes were invented at some point in time. In an article called *The Syringe Driver and the Subcutaneous Route in Palliative Care: The Inventor, the [h]istory and the Implications,* Graham, Fiona mentioned “[i]n the nineteen sixties, syringe pumps were used to give intravenous cytotoxic drugs” (34). Based on the following quote of Fiona, the steel syringe could have originated from the early twentieth century. By having a timeline from where the artifact originated, more background information can be viewed based on the innovation during that specific timeline. To reconsider, a medical tool as an artifact reveals its proper compound material, initial background, and main function of a syringe.

Apart from describing features of the steel syringe, every artifact has a historical background. In an article called *[t]he [a]ll-[g]lass Lüer [s]yringe: [h]istorical [f]acts around [c]oncepts, introduction and patents*, Wiepking, Floris mentioned “Harry Brearley of Sheffield (UK), who discovered stainless steel in nineteen thirteen, by adding twelve-point eight percent of chromium to molten iron to produce a non-rusting metal” (3). According to Floris, when people discover new materials, new benefits can be found that other known materials do not have. So as new materials are discovered medical tools are improving to which leave a historical mark on medical science. One of the ways of how a medical tool establishes history is by establishing a historical event. In a book called *A Golden Age of Clinical Chemistry: nineteen forty-eight–nineteen sixty,* Louis Rosenfeld said “The first American-made interchangeable syringe was developed by Joseph J. Kleiner (eighteen ninety-seven–nineteen seventy-four)” (1708). According to Louis Rosenfeld’s textual evidence, American medical inventors who invented syringes in the early twentieth century started the first step by introducing syringes in the United States, leading to the creation of various types of syringes such as the steel syringe. However, the steel syringe contributes to its historical background by knowing the cultural significance. In a book called *DNA [s]equencing [u]sing [r]olling [c]ircle [a]mplification and [p]recision [g]lass [s]yringes in a [h]igh-[t]hroughput [l]iquid [h]andling [s]ystem,* Wu, Hui-Chung mentioned “stainless-steel syringes with Teflon coating were used for liquid handling purposes” (205).Syringes are commonly used for managing substances, such as drawing blood from a person or administering medication to a patient. By ensuring the safe and proper use of syringes, healthcare providers can administer patients who require medication. Ultimately, a historical biography of the steel syringe can be expressed by historical shifts, events, and cultural benefits.

As a vital step of identifying an artifact in a museum the engaging occurrence to the viewer is another step of why the viewer would be interested in an artifact that deals with medical technology. When a historic artifact originates from the same place where the viewer currently lives, it is likely that the viewer will be interested in it. The steel syringe in the Southern History Museum can attract the audience by the curiosity of the audience of how medical needs were practiced throughout history. An artifact can also attract the audience’s interest by evoking memories or associations with a particular event that relates to the artifact. In addition, medical injections that syringes provide to people are another way that makes the steel syringe a valuable artifact to the viewer. In this case the viewer can evaluate how important a syringe can be by noticing what type of illnesses the viewer had experienced. Many times, a viewer who does not appreciate having to use medical syringes can be alarming, but for those who have interests of nursery or medical majors appreciate a piece of the past in medication. Noticing an artifact that has a lot of meaning in the property of health can cause interest towards the steel syringe.

In conclusion the way of describing the steel syringe in the Southern History Museum at Houston Christian University is by acknowledging the profile, historical setting, and impression of an artifact that belong in medical technology.

Works Cited

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