

ABSTRACT

The History Of Health and Healthcare in Trinidad And Tobago

1938-1962

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The dissertation explores the evolution of the Trinidadian and Tobagonian health system from 1939, the beginning of the Second World War, so pivotal to the country's development, to the year of independence from British rule, 1962. It focuses specifically on how the expansion has been facilitated and hindered by colonial forces and has influenced the movement towards independence.

This work assesses specifically the changes in morbidity, medical facilities and personnel while examining the relationship of traditionalism and modernity and the external, socio-economic and political influences to ascertain the catalysts and consequences of change in health in Trinidad and Tobago. It establishes the period as the most progressive in health and health care but spotlights the issues of underdevelopment as part of a greater colonial legacy of conformity and resistance. It looks closely at the issue of decolonisation and its role as a catalyst in development in health and medical care, but also as a perpetuating force of dependence, a direct contradiction of this principle. This work establishes the experiences in this sector as a microcosm of the colony's overall state as it evolved from colonialism to independence.

The history of health in the Caribbean has been explored mainly as a facet of other prominent historical periods, such as enslavement, or topics, such as economic history. This dissertation establishes the history of health and medicine in the West Indies, and specifically in Trinidad and Tobago, as a significant subject in its own right, providing concrete evidence of its impact in shaping the society and reflecting the challenges and triumphs of a country in transition.

Keywords: Health, Healthcare, Independence, Women in Medicine, History of Medicine, West Indies, Hospitals, Diseases, West India Royal Commission, World War II, Rockefeller, Development, Imperialism, Colonialism, Nationalism, Decolonisation, Traditionalism, Bush Medicine