

* Original Article

The People's Golden Book – Raspail's Medical System in 19th-Century Portugal

Dulce Pombo

MA in Sociology of Science and Health, ISCTE/IUL (Lisbon University Institute), Portugal
mariadulcepombo@gmail.com

DOI:10.3395/recis.v5i4.555en

Abstract

This article discusses Raspail's method or system, a therapeutic approach popular in Portugal by the mid-19th century that presented itself as an alternative to orthodox therapeutic practices by offering a practical and widely accessible handbook. At a time when the healing arts oscillated between dominant notions derived from earlier times and experimental medicine, Raspail's method found its way into the homes and lives of the Portuguese people as an alternative to traditional medicine and pharmaceutical practice, which were inadequate. Its use was incorporated into everyday life, and today it takes several forms as therapeutic practices classified as traditional knowledge. Using historical sources, this article aims to analyze the importance of Raspail's method and to describe and understand its scope as a heuristic tool in 19th-century discussions of health and disease.

Keywords: Sociology; Health; 19th century; History; Therapeutic Models; Raspail

Introduction

History is a crucial tool used to understand the present and that allows the examination of the contexts in which the explicative logic of a phenomenon — in this case, health and disease — was conceived. The 19th century, which saw the emergence of countless systems explaining health and disease, was a time of struggle between scientific medicine, which aimed at controlling the medical field, and other therapeutic approaches that were used in daily life.

Before this time, the holistic view prevailed not only among practitioners but also among academicians; healers were concerned with restoring what they viewed as the normal function of the organism as a whole. Until the late 18th century, disease was interpreted within a framework combining environmentalism and humoral theory. Preventive therapies, which sought to normalize and readjust imbalances, mandated the removal of excessively increased humors using bleeding, purgation, vomiting, and other practices.

In humoral medicine, prophylaxis or prevention was considered as important as therapeutics. The best path to preserving health required moderation in eating and drinking and the clothes that one wore, breathing air of good quality, taking appropriate exercise and rest, ensuring proper excretions and retentions, and moderating the emotions or passions (LINDEMANN, 2002).

Although these principles suffered several readjustments over time, they continued to serve as a reference for medical scholars in the first half of the 19th century and formed the basis of many emerging therapeutic doctrines. Over the course of the 19th century, several methods and handbooks taught therapeutic practices and hygienic rules that made bleeding, purgation, emetics, and sudorifics indispensable. Sacks (2003) observed that heroic theories, which were grounded in bleeding and purgation, were still widely used by English doctors in the 19th century and that despite the advancement of asepsis and anesthesia, these techniques were not significantly applied in practice before 1858.

As there were few medical doctors and the qualifications of those who did practice medicine were often doubtful, domestic or popular medicine handbooks were often found in the homes of families seeking remedies for various illnesses. This is how Raspail's *The People's Golden Book, Health Handbook or Domestic Medicine and Pharmacy* found its way into the Kingdom of Portugal. The *Health Handbook* was reproduced both in its entire original version and in parts to better inform the readers of journals and magazines:

(...) These little books, sometimes cruel, but always sparkling, and exhibiting an

unpredictable 'spirit', had a healthy effect on our people's social and domestic habits. More air and water entered the households together with them, as well as light that up to that moment was rated superfluous. "The Barbs" helped Raspail and Pasteur in their disinfection mission applied to Portuguese households. Their moral influence was also huge (...). (Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, As Farpas, apud. Viana Moog, Eça de Queirós e o século XIX, cit. Mérian 2007, p. 216, Revista Convergência Lusíada, nº 24)

Raspail's *Health Handbook* offered less painful treatments than the therapies that had been suggested and practiced until then. Raspail's therapeutics, along with homeopathy, were presented to 19 th-century Portugal as a medical alternative to contemporary therapeutic orthodoxy. According to Porter (1994), the term 'alternative medicine' is applied by medical practitioners who are empowered to draw the boundaries between orthodox medical systems and deviating systems based on their legally professionalized authority.

"(...) The other practitioners who offered alternative methods of treatment in miraculous cures — defined as quacks — became the subject of continuous denunciation, especially because the penal code stipulated that the practice of medicine without a diploma was punishable by jail (...)." (Medicina Contemporânea , I Anno, nº 9, 4-III-1883, p. 69). Quacks had to be fought, as did empirics and anyone who practiced medicine without accreditation and acknowledged skills (FOUCAULT, 2006)

The medical guild, claiming to maintain professional standards, gradually closed the ranks of the profession, permitting entry only to a select few practitioners. This exclusivity led to the marginalization and stigmatization of other medical professionals (PORTER, 1994), pushing them to a place that even they themselves called quackery.

"(...) The demarcation between quackery and orthodoxy is essentially social. Quacks are doctors excluded from professional power and privilege. (...) In the course of the 19 th century, the orthodox doctors were granted even more power in the public health within the state framework (...)" (PORTER, 1994, p. 64-65)

For the term 'alternative medicine' to have meaning, there must be an acknowledged or at least stable orthodoxy against which the former is defined. This orthodoxy only emerged in the field of Western health and disease in the 19 th century (BIVINS, 2007).

This article discusses the importance that the "Golden Book" or Raspail's method had in the social and therapeutic milieu of this time . It also invites readers to undertake sociological analyses of different medical systems that might contribute to a better understanding of the rationales underlying the prevalent beliefs regarding health, disease, and therapeutic pluralism in 19 th-century Portugal.

Methods and sources

This article is based on a study carried out by the author for her MA in the Sociology of Health and Disease at ISCTE, University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal, titled *Therapeutic Models Active in Portugal in the 19 th Century, aiming at disclosing their actors, discourses and controversies*. Raspail's system or method was one of thirteen therapeutic systems that our research uncovered .

To understand the relationships among these therapeutic models, we examined records and analyzed documents from 19 th-century Portugal. Among the journals available, we highlight the *Portuense* and *Lisbonense Homeopathic Gazettes*; *Gazetas Médicas* ; *Jornal de Ciências Médicas de Lisboa* ; *Jornal do Médico* ; the journals *O Instituto* of Coimbra and *O Médico*; and the magazines *Medicina Contemporânea* , *Universal Lisbonense* , and *Médica Portuguesa* from Lisbon, among others. Almanacs, leaflets, and the available literature were also consulted, as were contemporary medical books.

With the texts, we mainly sought to understand the stages of and actors in the alternative medicine movements investigated. The books we consulted on the history of medicine were mostly written by doctors and contributed little to our understanding of the alternative systems; rather, these texts exhibited strong biases and viciously criticized these systems. For this reason, we had to examine old historical records to create a more accurate map of the medical theories that existed in Portugal in the 1800s.

The history of Portuguese therapeutics may be approached from different directions. One approach is to narrate the history of medical advances as reported by contemporaneous doctors and the historians who later recounted these feats; a second approach is to unearth historical narratives that were forgotten because they appeared trivial. Viewing the past through a sociological lens means

respecting the heroes of that time; however, one must report not only on medical developments but also on the revered and forgotten geniuses and other actors who, whether credited or isolated in their time, had a place on the stage and who, as social actors, were disposed to contribute to the history of the science.

History is considered a precious weapon for this intellectual liberation from the instituted categories of thought. It is not a matter for sociologists to become historians, but they must know how to analyze the historical dimension of the phenomena they study in order to perceive clearly that their configuration(s) are plural, that they are intimately related to the contexts in which they are inserted and acquire meaning and shape (...). (ALVES, 2011, p. 96)

Marc Bloch described sociology as a satellite of history, and Norbert Elias, when discussing the relationship between sociology and history (2001), stressed the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to both, as sociology concerns itself with societies and history with individuals. It is not our intent to explore the notion of medicine or non-medicine. The idea in the present study is to revive enunciated discourses and published handbooks and to examine their meanings and actions that were based on them. We seek to come closer to a history we do not know, which has not yet been analyzed and which, thus, is still 'non-history'. The present study was not motivated by the idea of exposing conflict or opposition among medical systems but only by the aim of reporting events.

(...) All events, discoveries, and ideas sooner or later will be questioned; however, even the losers are remembered by history (...) this history is also revisionist. It is a part of what is currently known as a new history of medicine as well as of the recent social history of medicine (...) for a long time, the history of medicine could be properly described as iatrocetric, that is, doctors wrote the history of medicine (...) focusing on biographies and bibliographies, medical theories and practices. Such histories were essentially subjective (...) they produced exultant chronicles of medical progress and inflamed biographies of pioneering doctors (...). (LINDEMANN, 1999, pp. 1-2)

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, disillusionment with healthcare led to revisions of the history of medicine. This new history considers major social and political forces to achieve a better understanding of the role of medicine in society:

(...) Critics of modern and technocratic medicine attacked the prerogatives of a professional medical elite, while simultaneously condemning the inhuman nature of modern medical treatment (...) the doubts cast on modern medicine multiplied, and many regretted the manipulative nature of medicine's rule over the modern world. Thomas Szasz in turn bitterly regretted the abuses committed by modern psychiatry, ... Michel Foucault added his pessimistic appraisal of the results of the growth of scientific medicine at the end of the 18 th century (...). (LINDEMANN, 1999, p. 5)

For many centuries, a conflict persisted between holistic theories and alternative medicine due to opposition to mechanistic theories of disease, which postulate that health and disease concern the individual as a whole. Disease involves more than just the physical body, and the body is able to regenerate itself if an individual adopts lifestyle changes. Laypeople dissatisfied with contemporary medicine and the church's view of disease as punishment sought to elaborate a philosophy of healthy living.

(...) All of them conflicted with conventional medicine. Each one spoke in its own language that the full system of allopathic medicine was radically wrong. Characteristically, they accused orthodoxy of fighting banal diseases with poisonous drugs. Each one devised a new program for life grounded on the trends of nature and argued for the use of natural methods of healing (...). (PORTER, 2001, p. 116)

Both theories called for investing the individual with new control over his or her health. Holism was popular once again, promising a more positive notion of health than conventional medicine, with its reliance on pills for every ailment. These theories and attitudes were not welcomed by a medical profession in the 19 th century that was achieving increasing prestige.

Without pretending to judge who was right or wrong, or who were scientists and who were quacks, we aim to describe the struggle of these historical figures to improve health, as is our duty when addressing the past. In other words, we intend not to judge but to identify the links connecting the network of therapeutic movements in the hopes of contributing to an understanding of health in Portugal.

Portuguese health from the beginning of to the mid-19th century

At the beginning of the 19 th century, healthcare in Portugal was abysmal. Human beings lacked the mere essentials, and the Mercy Houses did what they could and more to minimize suffering and fulfill their mission to assist those in need.

The scourge of French invasions left thousands of families in utter poverty. Moreover, the number of indigents increased, and high numbers of children were exposed to disease (OLIVEIRA, 1992, p. 36). It was believed that the decision of who would live and who would die belonged to God and that science had no right to interfere in this process. Dom José, Crown prince and older sibling of Regent prince Dom João , for example, died from smallpox because his mother, Dona Maria I, believed that only God could decide her son's fate and forbade doctors from giving him the vaccine (CALMON, 1959).

When many towns fell prey to the plague in the early decades of the 19 th century, clinicians and surgeons were too few to meet the demands, and few treatments were available. The lack of satisfactory clinical professionals contributed to the high number of deaths that occurred in 1837 when smallpox entered the country; the King was informed that night watchmen saw ill people thrown into the streets in Lisbon (SERRÃO, 1989).

Apart from the lack of doctors and the waves of epidemics devastating Europe, other factors also conspired against the health of the Portuguese during the first half of the 19 th century. For instance, lack of aseptic techniques contributed to the proliferation of disease:

(...) Serious sanitation problems remained in the towns in the Kingdom; garbage was thrown anywhere and everywhere (...) Spaces were soiled with organic waste (...) animals circulated on the streets, mostly tramp dogs, dairy cows and goats, together with transport animals such as horses, donkeys and oxen (...) This picture was worsened by the many herds crossing the towns in transhumant seasons, exacerbating the lack of cleanliness of the unpaved streets (...). (BRAGA, 2001, p.129, in Madureira, 1990, p. 53)

Together with the pollutants emitted by factories, slaughterhouses, and tripe vendors slaughtering and processing animal organs, dirt and fetid smells were ubiquitous in the towns and even affected the water supplies. Aware that dirty water posed a danger to public health, a health council was formed in 1837 to ban these activities from inner city areas (BRAGA, 2001).

If urban hygiene in the 19 th century left much to be desired, so did personal hygiene. Household linens and personal clothing were only changed when they became excessively dirty. Regular baths at home only emerged as a novelty at the end of the century, as did treatises on hydrotherapy that trumpeted the benefits of water treatments (AIRIÉS, 1990). It was customary to burn the clothes and bed sheets used by the sick, especially during epidemics. Doctor José Pinheiro de Freitas Soares (1769-1831) suggested a multi-stage technique to wash the clothes of ill people in 1818 that helped to protect washerwomen against disease (LEMOS, 1991).

In addition to epidemics, the Portuguese people were exposed to a wide range of infections and nutritional diseases in the 1800s, particularly ulcers and other stomach illnesses, venereal disease, skin diseases, bronchitis, rheumatism, fevers, pneumonia, mental illness, heart disease, and contusions, all of which frequently resulted in suffering and death (CARVALHO, 1929).

The most common treatments were the use of frictions, emetics, purgatives, Peruvian bark, ether, and bleeding, and the use of leeches was widespread. The 19 th century was still deeply influenced by environmentalism and humoral theory in the interpretation of disease, resulting in part from a shortage of medical practitioners that persisted until the end of the century; many populations near the Spanish border often called on doctors in neighboring countries (LINDEMANN, 2002). Treatment at home was preferred in rural areas, and healthcare was a trade carried out not only by qualified individuals but also by healers who were fully estranged from modern medicine and chemical pharmacy. Most people preferred to be treated at home or by barbers or healers, and hospitals were used as a last resort (BRAGA, 2001).

In virtually all Kingdom Councils, doctors complained that their interests were harmed by other health practitioners who lacked scientific qualifications (Gazeta Médica de Lisboa , from August 16, 1859). In 1822, the Constituent Courts discussed the existence of impersonators self-described as physicians:

(...) This same complaint is made by all foreigners writing on therapeutics because this very same negligence occurs in every country (...). It is needed to abolish the class of impersonators, that is, men healing with Medicine without being physicians (...) anyone

who is not a legitimate Medical physician is fully and absolutely forbidden from prescribing drugs for each and every illness, that is, anyone who is not a bachelor in Medicine and graduated from the University of Coimbra or any other accredited University (...) Discussion at the Constituent Courts in 1822. (OLIVEIRA, 1992, p. 119)

Doctors continued denouncing practitioners offering alternative methods until the end of the 19th century:

(...) The insistence of doctors in this regard made patent some deficits in the state, as in 1912, they still proclaimed that the state was unable to enact the laws; it also demonstrates the difficulties experienced by physicians to ensure professional exclusiveness in a society where the invocation of science and holding a diploma were still not enough. In fact, large strata of the Portuguese population seemed to trust the traditional methods more (...). (GARNEL, 2003, p. 219)

Yet, despite doctors' efforts, homemade remedies and medicines prepared by nonphysicians proclaiming to possess specific knowledge remained popular, even among the highest of social strata. In 1844, Queen Dona Maria I, feeling she was "wasting away," called a healer from Famalicão after doctors failed to heal her. Apothecaries were appreciated for their chemical knowledge, performed consultations and formulated secret remedies (LEMOS, 1974).

Regarding the best therapeutic methods to use, doctors and physicians oscillated between the conceptions that prevailed during the previous century and the increasingly experimental science (MIRA, 1947) until the mid-19th century. Portugal appeared to be a kingdom where anyone could offer alternatives that were better than orthodox medicine, with its therapeutic uncertainty. This was the environment in which Raspail's system took root.

Raspail's Health Handbook

In 1845, the French chemist François-Vincent Raspail (1794-1878), a member of the Academy of the Paris Faculty of Medicine, published his *The People's Golden Book, Health Handbook or Domestic Medicine and Pharmacy*. The use of the book spread widely, not only in France, but also all over Europe.

The book was easy to consult, and readers learned, page after page, to reorganize their physical environment, manage their diet, and pay proper attention to external factors harmful to health. Apart from hygienic rules, the book also supplied the elements and formulas needed to prepare Raspail's medicines.

With his *Health Handbook*, Raspail sought to teach methods of treating diseases and preserving health without the use of doctors, pharmacists, medications, or poisons. French doctors spared no effort to prove that the book was an attack on public health, and Raspail was often accused of illegally practicing medicine. However, in spite of such denunciations, the only punishment Raspail ever received was a fine for refusing to accept a medical diploma presented to him by the University.

(...) I have observed in hospitals cases of application of caustics that made me shiver, and I believe that this kind of display of the barbarian aberrations of medicine is the reason why I never wanted to join the medical faculty. I did not have the nerve to do this like everybody else, but I still have not found the means to act differently and in a less revolting manner. Then it was too soon, now it is too late. My discovery is so simple that anyone can do it; how might I call myself a doctor, when everybody will soon and easily find out that they are as learned as I am? (...) (RASPAIL, 1884, p. 105).

Raspail reduced the causes of disease to nine categories: *asphyxiating*, resulting from a lack or impurity of air, or miasmatic poisoning; *thermal*, resulting from continuous excess of heat or cold, or from sudden passing from one to the other; *traumatic*, contusions, fractures, crushed bones, sores, and wounds of any nature caused by bruising, boring, or cutting instruments; *acanthogenic*, involving the introduction of prickles, brim, barn dust, plant hair, or other small wind-borne bodies inhaled with air into the bodily tissues; *phymatogenic*, resulting from the introduction of seeds or other substances that swell in damp conditions and cause obstructions in body cavities; *entomogenic*, caused by internal parasitism by aquatic eggs, worms, larvae, flies, caterpillars, insects, lice, fleas, bedbugs, or bowel worms, which plagued man since birth; *toxic*, due to the ingestion or inhalation of poisons; *dietary*, arising from an excess, deficit, or the poor quality of foodstuffs; and finally, diseases arising from *moral causes*.

To combat the health problems associated with these nine categories, Raspail recommended the use

of substances and herbs, such as alcohol at 40°, aloes, liquid ammonia at 22°, calomel (sub- or protochloride of mercury, used as a purgative), purified camphor, lard, male fern (powdered root), powdered wild madder (also used in dyestuffs), Norwegian tar, the skin of rosemary root, pomegranate, and castor oil.

Raspail's therapeutics

Therapeutics, procedures, and preparations were described in Raspail's *Health Handbook*. This book was divided into three parts. The first part devoted ten chapters to the causes of disease, the second contained thirty chapters on domestic pharmacy and the preparation and use of medicines based on Raspail's method, and the third was divided into two sections dealing with the treatment of the most common diseases.

In the first part, readers were instructed in finding the most hygienic location for their homes:

(...) Choose housing exposed to the sun, protected from the emanations of lakes, rivers, factories and unhealthy establishments. Do not reside in stores or rooms at ground level, due to their dampness, or in mezzanines, attics, or garrets, due to their low height or wall footprint, which cause you to breathe exclusively the air expelled from our lungs; but do [reside] in houses with chimneys, high ceilings, wide windows opened to the East, to the noon, or at least to the West (...) (RASPAIL, 1850, Chapter II, p. 23).

Home decoration, especially in the bedrooms, was to be free of elements attracting insects or creating odors. The walls were to bear only a layer of good oil paint or wallpaper pasted by means of animal skin glue aromatized over the fire with black pepper, camphor and aloes. The wool of mattresses was to be mixed with black pepper or morsels of camphor, and the rooms used by children were to contain chosen leaves of Spinulose wood fern. Floors were to be waxed rather than washed, and beds were to be exposed to the air.

Techniques were also suggested for building chimneys to avoid the concentration of smoke and gases in the kitchen or other rooms. Next came instructions to disinfect latrines, as well as measures to be taken regarding the clothes of adults and children:

(...) Change your underwear often, and have one set to sleep in and another one to wear during the day. Choose loose and simple clothes. You just need the minimum to be properly covered, anything else is a cause of fatigue; loose clothes increase strength and favor flexibility; narrowness enervates and asphyxiates (...) Cover your infants, do not tighten them: bands must dress them, not imprison them. As soon as the weather becomes warm, leave them to move freely in the healthy air and light (...) (RASPAIL, 1850, Chapter III, p. 27).

Raspail devoted ten pages to recipes for meats used to heal gastritis and preserve health. Nutrition and food quality, preparation, and hygiene were also addressed:

(...) The art of cooking is to hygiene what pharmacy is to medicine: good cookery prevents disease (...) Regulate your meals, almost weigh your nutriments, vary your dishes (...) To drink and to cook, use only spring water, however, well clarified. When in the field, do not drink to satisfaction water from wells or marshes because you might swallow leeches without taking notice (...) Simple wine is one thousand times better than the most delicious wine in the market (...) (RASPAIL, 1850, Chapter III, p. 30).

Raspail described how to prepare foods that are best for digestion and the ideal sauces and seasonings for fish, meat, and desserts. Salads were recommended to facilitate digestion.

Raspail also warned against poisons, cautioning readers against the remedies prescribed as medicine and employed by the industry, such as mercury, plant and animal poisons, prussic acid, strychnine, morphine, henbane, belladonna, and digitalis.

Changes in weather were also addressed in a series of recommendations, together with advice on hygiene with regard to clothes:

(...) Never leave your rooms in the winter without an extra covering, and do not enter a room without taking off a covering. (...) Imitate our village-women; they go to the market in all seasons, and also at any time during the night, but catch colds less often (...) Flannel clothes straight over the skin are very useful in the winter, and indispensable in the summer (...) avoid drafts of air (...) (RASPAIL, 1850, Chapter V, p. 52).

Raspail also recommended methods for cleaning schools, barracks, hospitals, and prisons.

In the *Health Handbook*, prickles, splinters, brim, and irritating powders were portrayed as extremely damaging to health. Raspail also gave instructions to avoid internal or external parasitism by mites, bedbugs, fleas, and worms, including tapeworms.

The first part concluded with a discussion of moral diseases; Raspail advised readers to conduct a thorough study of physical illnesses arising from moral causes, such as debauchery, lewdness, shame, fear, and regret.

The second part of the book comprised 28 chapters on the preparation and use of the domestic pharmacy of Raspail's system. It gave instructions for the preparation of the famous sedative water, with three different formulas, common, intermediate, and strong; it also gave clear, step-by-step directions for manipulating compounds. Raspail's sedative water preparations were recommended and sold to treat several conditions, but particularly fevers, due to the water's alkaline properties.

Raspail's therapeutics also included other types of waters. Salt water, oyster water, and salty lemonade were recommended, mostly for sore throats, as was tar water, which was suggested to help with urinary and gynecological problems.

Inexpensive aloe or *soccotrino* was also often used; it was directed to be dissolved in water or alcohol or taken as a powder. It could be taken orally and was also commonly used in clysters and to facilitate digestion.

Baths, mainly sedative or alkaline-iron, had an important role in Raspail's therapeutics. Baths were indicated for fevers; rheumatic pains; curvature of the spine; limb paralysis; diseases of the liver, kidneys, uterus and urinary tract; rabies and furious mania; drunkenness; lethal apoplexy; and delirium. Sedative baths, Raspail cautioned, were to be taken judiciously as to their types, lengths, and frequencies. They were recommended for both children and adults every six days until all complaints disappeared.

Raspail's therapeutics also stressed the use of blood baths as a prophylactic measure against paralysis, spinal deviations, and problems arising from the presence of excessive mercury in the body. These baths followed a specific ritual and were usually taken in slaughterhouses:

(...) In the case of general disease, place the individual's full body, but when disease is partial, only the ill parts, below the warm stream coming from the animal's vein. The individual must be wrapped with a sheet and exposed to the sun or close to it when it is too hot, and after the blood turns into a crust, the skin is cleansed with a soft brush, and then washed with water and camphorated alcohol, or Cologne water and common water (...). (Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail , 1865, Nº 17, p. 103)

These baths were to be performed every day until disease disappeared; if one was unable to go to a slaughterhouse, he or she could take the bath at home using the blood of chickens, rabbits, doves, or any other animal.

Camphor was the most popular of the substances employed. Together with alcohol, camphor was used externally as an antiseptic and cauterizing agent; it could also be used internally. Camphor powder could be inhaled or smoked. To expand its use, Raspail describes three formulas for powders to treat headaches and migraines, as well as to cover wounds and thus prevent the formation of scabs, unhealthy pus, and gangrene. Camphor was also used in treatments for the genitals, and the powder was used in the fabrication of Raspail's famous camphor cigarettes, which were used to convey the drug to the lungs.

Pomegranate was used to treat bowel worms; other treatments included metal sheets, plaques, probes, and galvanic pessaries made of copper or zinc to remove mercury, arsenic, and other toxins from the body.

The composition of clysters varied, including such elements as aloes, linseed grains, Gallic rose, and tobacco:

(...) Sometimes it happens, mainly in women, that tobacco clysters cause momentary narcosis and drunkenness. One should not be frightened; but lie down a few minutes on the bed and smell vinegar; and one will be promptly and fully recovered, free from the effects of both disease and medicine (...). (RASPAIL, 1884, p. 85).

Raspail also described how to prepare and apply curatives for ulcers, wounds, and ulcerations and how to prepare gargles, which he called *mouth clysters*.

Infusions, decoctions or tisanes, and macerations were nature's medicines, and injections served for cleansing and administering clysters into the genitals, ears, and nose and into fistulas and wounds. Among the substances used to prepare medicines, the following received special attention: potassium iodide and commercial mustard were used to treat skin diseases; castor oil was used for nausea; potash and bergamot oil were used to prepare pills against fetid breath; powdered male fern root was used for digestive problems; powdered wild madder root was to treat bone problems; rosemary root and white wine with pomegranate were used against tapeworm; and camphorated vinegar was used to purify indoor air in cases of fainting, as gargles, in plague carbuncles, and against contagious diseases. Next came four syrups and their compositions and indications.

In the last chapter of the second part, Raspail devoted three pages to explain to readers why he omitted from his therapeutics a long list of treatments and medications usually employed in contemporary medicine:

(...) We suppressed bleeding, either local or general, by means of leeches, scarified cupping glass or the lancet (...) by evacuating healthy vessels, the ill ones do not become unobstructed (...) if blood is vitiated, the one remaining is [as vitiated] as the extracted one (...) why appeal to these sanguinary and violent means? (...) I suppress vesicatories and cauteries (...) nature did not create a disease to heal others; it was Scholastic medicine that gave rise to this nonsense (...) vesicatories offer a further dangerous quality (...) an endermal poisoning, (...) I suppress polypharmacy, because with few medicines I am able to tend to all evils. A doctor only appeals to a multiplicity of medicines when he has exhausted his resources, then he fumbles and gropes at the expense and savings of the patient; (...) hunger horribly complicates all types of diseases. (...) I suppress poisonous salts, the use of quinine sulfate, this major medical feat (...) that sometimes defeats fever at the expense of gastritis and inflammation of the bowels (...) I suppress (...) all violent means, because the aim of the art of treating the sick is to give them the promptest relief and because medication must never look like torture, revenge, punishment. (...) I suppress applications of snow, mostly on the cranium, (...) We equally, and most severely, suppress the use of inhalations of ether and mainly of chloroform, which only relieve pain under threaten of losing [one's] life. (RASPAIL, 1884, pp. 103-106).

The third part was divided into two sections; in the first part, Raspail explained in fuller detail why some diseases developed, presenting suggestions for maintaining good health. His aim was for readers to learn how to be their own doctors; consequently, he gave varied examples and exhorted his audience to comply fully with the hygienic regime described in the first part of the book.

Next, Raspail gave 16 recommendations for good health, including advice regarding cold and drafts of air; suggestions for the heights of the ceilings in houses to avoid the damaging effects of wood stoves; changing ones clothes; thoughts on the ideal times for meals and postprandial rests; recommendations on the best wines and how to use them; prescriptions for the best seasonings to fight health problems; advice for students; advice to sleep well at night and on the importance of sleep; recommendations for the care of nursing children; warnings to avoid excessive bodily fatigue and pleasures; advice on how to maintain a regulated and honest lifestyle; and exhortations to remain loyal to family, job, and friends. Raspail also praised truth as a value essential for internal peace, writing, (...) liars and rogues suffer more than those whom they caused suffering. One can only live quietly and well with truth (...) (RASPAIL, 1884, p. 110).

In the second section, extending over 110 pages, Raspail listed diseases together with the therapeutic indications for each. The book concluded with the 19-page *Veterinary Handbook of the Art of Healing Animal Diseases*, in which Raspail described treatments for different diseases afflicting domestic animals.

Raspail's system or method in Portugal

By the mid-19th century, there was no consensus regarding the number of medical systems practiced in Portugal. In 1843, the *Jornal da Sociedade das Ciências Médicas de Lisboa* discussed and analyzed the medical doctrines prevailing in other European countries, while there were no authoritative data regarding the number of medical systems used in Portugal. In 1859, it was stated that, "(...) Thirteen medicines can be found in the field in these times (...)" (SINES, 1859, p. 3), each of which asserted its own superiority over the others.

One year earlier, in 1858, the Marshall Duke of Saldanha had expounded on the seven systems into which high medicine was divided in a booklet dedicated to King Dom Pedro V. Among these systems was that of Raspail, which was best known as "rational medicine."

Our research has led us to conclude that Raspail's system was brought to Lisbon approximately 1822 by Francisco Augusto Nogueira da Silva, a man of the Arts. After da Silva was diagnosed with a serious eye disease and had exhausted all resources available in scholastic and domestic medicine, he decided to test Raspail's medicine. For this purpose, he bought a handbook; with much difficulty, he managed to read some pages in which he found a remedy for his disease and recovered his sight. Later, da Silva used this handbook to treat sick people and became known as "the doctor of Entre Muros" because he resided in the Lisbon street of this name. Neighboring pharmacists called him a quack, and their contempt caused him to move away (MORENO, 1997).

To the best of our knowledge, Raspail's first book was published in Lisbon under the title *Health Yearbook Handbook for 1849, or Medicine and Pharmacy*. The second translation was published in 1850 in Lisbon, aiming to reach those who lacked the financial means for needed treatment:

(...) everybody knows that in Portugal, as in any other country, not everybody has the money needed to pay doctors, and often banal diseases become chronic or incurable over the course of time (...) (RASPAIL, 1850, p. IV).

This same year, the *Jornal das Ciências Médicas de Lisboa* published an article on Raspail's system. The explicit mission of this journal was to discuss new medical ideas. In 1856, the journal published a second article on Raspail's system.

The third edition of the Handbook appeared in Lisbon in 1851. An alleged fifth edition was published in Porto; however, our research has shown that this was actually the fourth edition. Three other editions were also published in Porto, two in 1863 and one in 1867. The eighth edition was published in 1884 in Porto under the title *The People's Golden Book, Health Handbook, or Domestic Medicine and Pharmacy*.

The first edition includes a summary of the history of medicine extending over 91 pages and a critique of the state of chaos and anarchy in contemporary Medicine and the art of healing and is the only edition to do so. Raspail suggested that this critique was the reason for the book's success :

(...) that Handbook is currently in its 3rd edition, it is widely used in the French language and has been translated into several other languages. The same enthusiasm the original [provoked] is also developing among us, and the need for a translation into our own language was strongly felt (...).(RASPAIL, 1849, in *Advertência ao leitor* , I-III)

From the first edition onwards, Raspail's system gained a reputation among the residents of the Portuguese capital as the humanitarian and miraculous medicine one sought *in extremis*.

(...) All across the capital, it is becoming increasingly known that there is a saving medicine and all want to know it by their own experience . In 1851, he opened an office in Lisbon, where consultations were free for both rich and poor. The Raspail Humanitarian Society promoted outpatient clinics both inside and outside Lisbon (...). (SINES, 1859, pp. 42-44).

Raspail opened his first Lisbon office in 1854, at Arco da Bandeira Street, number 112, on the second floor, which belonged to a pharmacy located at Vitória Street, numbers 90-92. This office remained open to the public until 1867, always applying the same therapeutic program and treating sick people otherwise deprived of medical assistance. Upon opening his Lisbon office, Raspail began editing a journal, seeking to inform the public of medical results obtained by means of his system. This journal was discontinued in 1857 for unknown reasons until the monthly *Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail* began to be published in Lisbon in October 1865. This journal expounded on the therapeutic philosophy of Raspail's system and included practical cases describing the cures performed.

Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail discussed the importance of Raspail's therapeutics for the treatment and prevention of cholera:

(...) When cholera first appeared in 1833, the treatment used at the time consisted of the physician speaking as much nonsense as his exalted imagination allowed. Some [doctors] bled, and others applied insects [to patients]. Some placed strong cataplasms of mustard on the patient's stomach, or hit it with nettles. Others placed a three-inch wide piece of cloth soaked in turpentine along the spine of the unfortunate patient. With the help of a hot iron, the cloth was dried and glued to the epidermis; next, the

physician violently tore this dressing away, taking with it the skin of the miserable victim of such barbarous act. The result was that almost all of the affected died. Now, in 1856, when cholera visited us for the second time, mortality was much lower, certainly not due to changes in theories or amendments to the treatment adopted by medicine; because mutatis mutandis, it was in the very same state as thirty-two years earlier, (...) In 1833, only one medicine was practiced, which exhausted the sick and prohibited everything that would have enabled them to resist disease. In 1856, there was a rival system that, based on different grounds, advised the exact opposite (...). (Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail , 1865, N° 1, pp. 12-13)

The Duke of Saldanha was an adept and active propagator of Raspail's system, which was the subject of more than six pages of a booklet he produced and dedicated to King Dom Pedro V. The Duke proclaimed Raspail's system of great benefit to mankind because it suppressed all "martyrizing" therapeutic means, as well as "polypharmacy"; instead, it allowed people to rid themselves of a plethora of drugs traditionally used to treat both banal complaints, such as illnesses of the chest and throat, and more complex diseases.

Petitioning the government for a separate hospital ward for the use of Raspail's system, Raspail's adherents cited the statistics of patients the system had cured in the fight against cholera:

(...) the efficacy of the means advised by the wise Raspail was placed in evidence before the eyes of the entire population and was demonstrated by the statistics that were published at the time. Whereas by means of the flasks, narcotics, and diet method, half or two thirds of the sick died, we did not lose one single patient who was treated immediately and remained under our care, only one out nine died among those who were already in treatment or to whom we arrived too late (...) At that time, we asked the government to give us a ward at the hospital to treat those affected by cholera according to Raspail's system, to compare both medicines, and to allow the one acknowledged as more profitable to mankind to be the one remaining in practice; but the government remained mute and silent regarding our request. For the same purpose, we asked the Duke of Saldanha [to intercede], he had just recovered his health with our medicines, after no one else was able to heal him; but not even he was able to achieve anything, and the people lost, when they had much to gain (...), (Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail , 1865, N° 1, p. 12).

Doctor Guilherme Centazzi (1808-1875) complained of the lack of advocacy for Raspail's system by the aristocracy or the academy and promised not to give up the cause. He championed the system and called for a truce to end its hateful rivalry with traditional medicine so that public health and wellbeing would not be sacrificed for the sake of wounded pride:

(...) Today this medicine, with many learned and skilled men: doctors, professors at schools and universities, able by fact and right to pick up any scientific gauntlet thrown at them (...) Raspail's Medicine is not currently a factory of healers; if there are some, we may also find them among all other medicines (...) If our contemporaries are blind and deaf to these truths, the future [ones] will bow down to them, [once] they are sanctioned by the irrefutable proof of facts(...). (Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail , 1865, N° 7, pp. 44-49).

In 1885, an anonymous group of Portuguese citizens in Coimbra released the book *Raspail and Old Medicine for the sake of the Academic-Philanthropic Society, by a Raspail adept* . The book accused doctors of living in the past and exhibiting ill will toward Raspail's system; its authors made a point of clarifying that they neither were nor wished to become doctors, stating:

(...) Although we write about medicine, do not judge us to be doctors; we are not and do not intend to enter such profession(...). (Raspail e a Velha Medicina , 1855, p. 5)

The authors promised that the new system would become popular; the only way that this would not come to pass, they claimed, would be for the doctors to succeed in suppressing it.

Raspail's Portuguese followers accused the medical profession of arrogance and phoniness because it fought diseases through "martyrizing" means, such as strict diets that only further weakened the sick. Raspail's followers pointed to the greater incidence of disease in towns than in the countryside, attributing this phenomenon to the irrationality of the medicine practiced by doctors, i.e., the excessive prescription of medicines:

(...) The sons of Hippocrates sacrifice at each step the wealth of citizens to their

tenacious and stupid fondness for an irrational and contradictory system, ruining, sometimes forever, or weakening the strong and blooming constitutions that unfortunately fall in their hands by means of a half dozen prescriptions whose weight patients must pay in gold(...).(Raspail e a Velha Medicina , 1855, p. 10)

On page 30 of the book, Raspail's adherents bemoaned the critical appellation they had been given, stating,

(...) Whereas the word healer is properly chosen as a synonym of Raspail-follower because healer is one who heals, but has someone ever been sent to jail because he healed, as if healing were a synonym of killing, whereas they are fully contrary things?! (...) (Raspail e a Velha Medicina , 1855, p. 14)

Raspail attracted many followers in Portugal, including Eça de Queiroz, who, upon Raspail's death, wrote:

(...) Raspail, the greatest among all of them, leaves a huge void in the earth impossible to fill. One of the most powerful social powers in the modern world has disappeared with him, the most fertile and glorious portion of the people's soul. He was the biggest contributor to the scientific discoveries of this century. (...) He founded hygiene on new grounds, not in dependence on medicine, but as an unfolding of social science (...) You must trust this doctor with the mission of helping you when you become ill by means of his advice, to accomplish the relief of a husband, a father, a good mother, a brother and the dear children, in one word, which you rate the most precious you have on earth, in case you do not trust yourself [enough] to dismiss [any] doctor (...). (MATOS, 2008, p. 23)

Camilo Castelo Branco also paid his respects to Raspail's *Health Handbook* in *From the Brazilian's Prazins* and devised the priestly oath to treat diseases that had until that moment been considered beyond the scope of the clergy:

(...) The devil she has is disease (...) had to buy Raspail's Handbook and check what he said about this disease, because in Pernambuco the full caste of diseases was healed by Raspail's [system], and the devil might take the friar and the misfortunate results of exorcisms. However, rather [he] buy Raspail's Handbook, agreed father Osório, and he left [feeling] very tired – he used to tell the sister to deal with both horses (...). (BRANCO, 1882, p. 72)

Conclusion

This article encourages scientific interest in its subject and urges more thorough studies to understand the notions, explanations, and methods used to address health and disease in the 19th century. Such knowledge will no doubt increase current understanding and allow us to deepen the sociological analysis of the field of health and disease and its power relationships, protagonists, and consumers. Further studies will open a vast field of research that will reunite fragments of the history of health, disease, and treatment. Once united, these fragments may become invaluable materials with which to apprehend and analyze the history of health and disease in Portugal, which is indispensable for the scientific project of sociology.

Bibliographic references

AIRIÉS, F. DUBY, G., **História da Vida Privada**, V. 4, Porto, Afrontamento, 1990

ALVES, Fátima, **A doença mental nem sempre é doença - racionalidades leigas sobre saúde e doença mental**, Porto, Afrontamento, 2011

BIVINS, Roberta, **Alternative Medicine – A History**, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007

BLOCH, Marc, **História e historiadores**, Lisboa, Teorema, 1998

BRAGA, Isabel M.D., **Assistência, Saúde Pública e Prática Médica em Portugal** (séculos XV-XIX), Lisboa, Universitária Editora, 2001

BRANCO, Camilo, Castelo, **A Brasileira de Prazins**, Porto, Ernesto Chardron, 1882

CALMON, Pedro, **História do Brasil**, v. IV, Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio, 1959

- CARVALHO, Augusto da Silva, **História da Medicina Portuguesa**, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1929
- ELIAS, Norbert, **A sociedade da corte: investigação sobre a sociologia da realeza e da aristocracia de corte**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2001.
- FOUCAULT, Michel, **O Nascimento da Clínica**, Rio de Janeiro, Forense, Universitária, 2006
- GARNEL, Maria Rita Lino, **O Poder Intelectual dos Médicos – finais do século XIX- Inícios do século XX**, Revista da História das Ideias, Vol. 24, Coimbra, Faculdade de Letras, 2003
- LEMOS, Maximiliano, **Camilo e os médicos**, Porto, Editorial Inova, 1994
- LEMOS, M, **História da medicina em Portugal: instituições e doutrinas**, Vol. II. Lisboa: D.Quixote; Ordem dos Médicos, 1991
- LINDEMANN, Mary, **Medicina e Sociedade no Início da Europa Moderna**, Lisboa, Editora Replicação, 2002
- MADUREIRA, Nuno Luís, **Lisboa Luxo e Distinção 1750-1830**, Lisboa, Fragmentos, 1990
- MATOS, A. **Campos, Eça de Queiroz correspondência organização e anotações**, Lisboa, Editorial Caminho, 2008
- MORENO, Armando, **O Mundo Fascinante da Medicina**, Lisboa, Printipo, 1997
- MOURA, Carneiro, **O Século XIX em Portugal**, Lisboa, Editora Palhares, 1902
- OLIVEIRA, Luísa Tiago de, **A Saúde Pública no Vintismo, A Crise do Antigo Regime e as Cortes Constituintes de 1821 – 1822**, Lisboa, Edições João Sá, 1992
- PITA, João Rui, Farmácia, **Medicina e Saúde Pública em Portugal, (1772-1836)**, 1998
- POMBO, M. Dulce, **Modelos Terapêuticos em Movimento no Portugal do Século XIX – atores, discursos e controvérsias**, Dissertação de Mestrado, ISCTE-IUL, Lisboa, 2010
- PORTER, Roy, **História Ilustrada da Medicina**, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Revinter, 2001
- RASPAIL, V., **Manual Anuario da Saúde para 1849 ou medicina e Pharmacia Domésticas** Pela Typographia Castro & Irmão, 1849
- RASPAIL, V., **Manual de Saúde ou Medicina e farmácia domésticas**, Lisboa, Typ. De A.J.da Rocha, 1850
- RASPAIL, V., **O Livro D'Ouro do Povo**, Manual de Saúde ou Medicina e Pharmácia Domésticas Pela Typographia do Jornal do Porto 1884
- SAKS, Mike, **Ortodox and Alternative Medicine – Políticas, Professionalization and Health Care**, London, Sage, 2003
- SALDANHA, Marechal Duque de, **O Estado da Medicina em 1858**, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1858
- SERRÃO, Joel, **Temas Oitocentistas para a história de Portugal no século passado**, Lisboa, Edições Ática, 1959
- SERRÃO, Veríssimo, **História de Portugal, Vol. VI, VII, VIII, X**, Lisboa, Editorial Verbo, 1959
- SINES, J. D., **A Homeopathia comparada com os outros sistemas médicos**, Lisboa, Typographia de M.de J. Coelho, 1859
- SINES, J. D., **Memoria Dirigida ao Povo sobre os meios preservativos e curativos contra a Cholera, Cholerina e TYpho**, Lisboa, Typographia de M.de J. Coelho, 1856
- SOURINA, Jean Charles, **História da Medicina**, Lisboa, Instituto Piaget, 1992

19th century Gazettes, Journals, and pamphlets

- As Farpas: crónica mensal da política, das letras e dos costumes / Eça de Queirós,
Ramalho Ortigão (2004), S. João do Estoril, Principia

Esculápio, boletim semanal de medicina Lisboa de 3 /7/ 1850

Jornal Annaes de Medicina pelo Systema Raspail, 1865, Lisboa, Nº 7- 17, Typografia de J. G. de Sousa Neves, 1865

Jornal das Sciencias Médicas de Lisboa, 1850-1856

Folheto: Raspail e a velha medicina/por um raspalhista, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1855

Revista Medicina Contemporânea, I Anno, nº 9, 4-III-1883

Other:

Revista Convergência Lusíada, nº 24, p. 216, Presença de Eça de Queirós, Ramalho Ortigão, Rafael BordaloPinheiro no debate e na polémica naturalista no Brasil, Jean Yves Mérian, Real Gabinete Português de Leitura do Rio de Janeiro, Centro de Estudos, 2º Semestre - 2007