The Mesoamerican population who lived near the indigenous cultivation sites of the “Chocolate Tree” (*Theobroma cacao*) had a multitude of documented applications of chocolate as medicine, ranging from alleviating fatigue to preventing heart ailments to treating snakebite. Until recently, these applications have received little sound scientific scrutiny. Rather, it has been the reputed health claims stemming from Europe and the United States which have attracted considerable biomedical attention. This book, for the first time, describes the centuries-long quest to uncover chocolate’s potential health benefits. The authors explore variations in the types of evidence used to support chocolate’s use as medicine as well as note the ongoing tension over categorizing chocolate as food or medicine, and more recently, as functional food or nutraceutical. The authors, Wilson an historian of science and medicine, and Hurst an analytical chemist in the chocolate industry, bring their collective insights to bear upon the development of ideas and practices surrounding the use of chocolate as medicine. Chocolate’s use in this manner is explored first among the Mesoamerican peoples, then as it is transported to Europe, and back into Colonial North America. The authors then focus upon more recent bioscience experimental undertakings which have been aimed to ascertain both long-standing and novel suggestions as to chocolate’s efficacy as a medicinal and a nutritional substance. Chocolate’s reputation as the most craved food boosts this book’s appeal to food and biomedical scientists, cacao researchers, ethnobotanists, historians, folklorists, and healers of all types as well as to the general reading audience.
In 1804, at a time of industrial, political and intellectual ferment, Anna Seward (1742-1809) published the first biography of Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, was one of Britain's foremost physicians, scientists, poets and observers of nature. Anna Seward was a leading poet, critic and commentator. Both flourished in the effervescent cultural landscape of the late-eighteenth century and made Lichfield a provincial centre for intellectual activity. Throughout her biography, Seward describes encounters with influential figures, including members of the Lunar Society, and explores Darwin’s scientific and literary creativity. But her biography is more than a commentary on others: it reveals her complex relationship with Darwin, her love of poetry and the natural landscape, and the personality, challenges and aspirations of an intelligent, passionate and independent woman writer of the early Romantic period. Through an introductory essay and comments on the text, the editors provide a framework in which to understand Seward, Darwin and their times.
"Advice to a Young Physician" offers a fascinating glimpse into the world of post Restoration and early eighteenth-century medicine. For the first time, a document prepared by the Lichfield physician, Sir John Floyer for his grandson has been retrieved from the Library of The Queen’s College Oxford. Transcribed, and edited, it is now published in this attractive and accessible form. The document itself is prefaced by a very informative introduction and illustrated by a great range of well-chosen and reproduced images.

Floyer was in residence at Oxford during the great burst of scientific activity that followed the Restoration, and had links with Boyle and Robert Hooke, among other pioneers of modern science. In Floyer’s thinking, as demonstrated in this book, we see a contest or mingling between archaic ideas (such as the more or less medieval notion that appropriate medicines reveal themselves by their tastes) and pioneering and modern conceptions. Floyer remarks, for instance, that England lacks hospital training for doctors and recommends that his grandson go abroad to gain first-hand clinical experience. He was one of the first to tabulate medical results and – most famously – to pioneer the taking of the pulse. The book contains three central chapters in which Floyer offers remarks on what we would now call the ethics of medical practice. These are illuminating and would still, in many instances hold good today."
This book examines the personal, professional, and genteel achievements of Enlightenment London surgeon turned physician, Daniel Turner in a way which enhances our understanding of the boundary between surgeons and physicians in Enlightenment ‘marketplace’ practice. Turner’s pioneering writing on skin disease, *De Morbis Cutaneis*, emphasizes the skin’s role as a physical and professional boundary between university-educated physicians who treated internal disease and apprentice-trained surgeons relegated to the care of external disorders. Turner also argued that a pregnant woman’s imagination could be transferred to her unborn child, imprinting its skin with various marks and deformities. This stance sparked a major pamphlet war between Turner and London physician James Blondel, raising this phenomenon from a folk belief to a chief concern of Enlightenment natural philosophy. Turner’s career-long crusade against quackery and his voluminous writings on syphilis, a common ‘surgical’ disorder, provide a refined view into distinctions between orthodox and quack practices in 18th-Century London. Turner, long viewed as a pioneer in British dermatology, also holds the Anglo-American distinction of receiving a medical degree from Yale, the first such degree offered from Colonial America.
Childbirth: Changing Ideas and Practices in Britain and America, 1600 to the Present


This five-volume series provides the full medical, historical, and social context of childbirth by bringing together key articles on the expectant mother, the attendants of her delivery, and the health of the newborn infant. The articles are from British and American publications that focus upon childbirth practices over the past 300 years and are selected from both primary and secondary sources. Some are classic works in medical literature; others are from historical, sociological, anthropological and feminist literature that present a wider range of scholarly perspectives on childbirth issues.

In charting the progress of childbirth, midwifery, and obstetrics, this survey provides readers with key primary sources that illuminate the history of childbirth, midwifery and obstetrics. For example, general historical texts note that childbed (puerperal) fever claimed hundreds of thousands of maternal lives, and provoked much fear in Britain and America. The articles in this series, in addition to historical facts, also provide discussion of the causes and consequences of particular fever cases taken from the medical literature of the 19th and 20th centuries, and reveal what a challenge this disorder was to the medical profession. The articles collected in this series serve as a resource for students and teachers in various fields including history, women's studies, human biology, sociology and anthropology. They also meet the educational needs of pre-medical and nursing students and aid pre-professional, allied health, and midwifery instructors in lesson preparations. The series examines a wide range of practical experience and offers a historical perspective on the most important developments in the history of British and American childbirth, midwifery, and obstetrics.