Medicalisation of death at the turn of the 18th to 19th centuries. The moment of death, apparent death and attitudes towards the dead from the point of view of the history of medicine

Abstract:

Having considered some research results of contemporary historiography (especially Italian) and some period medical treatises, this paper is structured into three parts. The first one (Medicalisation of death in the medical discourse of the long 19th century) introduces some of the author's methodological and theoretical approaches to this topic, which can suit well the period of 1740-1900. The second part (Medicalisation of death in the sign of a paradox I. The moment of death and living dead) is dedicated to the problem of apparent death which has its origins in the 1740s. The medical discussion about apparent death can be considered as the beginning of medicalising death in the history of medicine. The status of death was rationalized; on the other hand, horror of being buried alive was born. The third part (Medicalisation of death in the sign of a paradox II. Time and space) considers some funeral reforms from the late 18th century and their impact on changing the attitudes of people towards dying and dead body. The well-known French discussion about the danger of mephitic vapours influenced many.

Keywords: *European governments, Apparent death, Medicalisation of death, Reforms of funeral services, The Enlightenment.*