Content and Connections: Designing Research Posters in the History of Medicine

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A characteristic feature of American advertising during the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) was the promise that certain products could promote personal health. Historians have identified these advertisements as part of a broader response to fears about the weakening of the American nation, which were in turn fed by anxieties about immigration, the closing of the frontier, and changes in racial and gender relations. The spread of Spanish Flu thus presented another kind of threat that advertisers used to promote products that promised to invigorate the body and replenish the spirit. There is no medical evidence to support claims made on behalf of these products – but they were probably not harmful either.
One of the most unusual advertising campaigns in response to the influenza epidemic was the effort to promote bicycle riding as a means of staying healthy. During the early 1900s, bicycle riding flourished as a recreational activity, especially for young men and women. Given the recommendations of public health officials to remain in the fresh air, get exercise, and avoid crowds, it made sense for bicycle manufacturers and retailers to incorporate these messages into their advertising. The Roanoke Cycle Company, featured in two of these advertisements, illustrates how urban populations were encouraged to use bicycles to escape the particular dangers of infectious diseases in a city environment.
Advertisers responded to Spanish Influenza by selling products that promised relief from painful and distressing symptoms, such as fever, sore throat, cough, congestion, and body aches. Many of these products were already being advertised in newspapers for treatment of various diseases; as the Spanish flu spread, however, advertisers began to use more alarmist language that responded to fears about a more virulent form of disease. Many products advertised as promising relief for the symptoms of influenza are similar to products now being used for similar purposes, including aspirin for pain, fruit juice for sore throats, and iron to restore strength. As these advertisements indicate, however, the promise of relief and recovery could easily become a promise to prevent infection, which was a claim unsupported by medical science.
Phoebe Bredin, Geography and Biological Sciences major

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Graphics: 2-3 visual aids to illustrate theme of the poster

Background consistent across all posters

Analysis: 100-120 words

Captions for graphics and obituaries

Project team listed on each poster

Header: photograph of patients at Catawba sanatorium

Introduction: < 25 words

Stories of victims: 2-3 individuals who died of consumption, using obituaries from Virginia newspapers

QR / URL for website
I. T. Tow

sensational advances claimed

promptly manufactured in Virginia, the manufacture of tobacco was questioned by the public, with a sense of urgency.

Koch's discovery of microorganisms provided immense interest throughout the United States. While some doctors praised the enormous advances claimed by Dr. Koch, others were more skeptical about the claim of a final determination of both cause and cure. More importantly, Virginia doctors, like their colleagues across the United States, questioned the necessity of Koch's new medicines for syphilis. In 1882, for example, the Virginia Medical Monthly pointed out Dr. Koch of concealing the methods of treatment from the public. The editor charged that Koch's secrecy was "prompted by other and less noble purposes than doing good by humanity.

Died at Hampton.

Dr. J. C.recently died at Hampton after long suffering from consumption. Mr. Beck was about 30 years of age and married. The patient came to Hampton in 1882, and lived in the city until his death in 1892.

The first decade of the 1900s marked a turning point in the campaign against tuberculosis. The first instance of "Tuberculosis in Kansas" was identified, and the public health approach changed the course of the disease. In 1894, the "Recall of Medical Journals" was distributed to Richmond schools to share the information with students. A "Tuberculosis in Kansas" revealed a campaign against public violence because it was found that bacteria could survive in air for more than a month. Thus, emphasis allowed public health officials to reach more people directly with the goal of changing their behavior.

The second Great Depression was one of the worst depressions in history, and its long-lasting effects were felt across the country. In the 1930s, the Great Depression had a significant impact on public health policies and programs. The economic downturn led to a decline in public health funding and services, which affected the ability of public health agencies to provide care and treatment to those in need.

The third is a dark period in American history, characterized by the outbreak of the influenza pandemic in 1918. The pandemic was particularly devastating in the United States, where it is estimated that over 675,000 people died. The pandemic highlighted the need for effective public health policies andprograms, and led to the establishment of the Rockefeller Foundation's Division of Medical Sciences.

The fourth and final Great Depression was a period of significant economic downturn and social upheaval in the United States, lasting from 1929 to 1939. The Great Depression had a profound impact on public health, with widespread poverty and unemployment leading to increased illness and disease. The failure of the public health system to address these challenges was highlighted during the pandemic of 1918-1919, which claimed an estimated 675,000 lives in the United States.
Poster Exhibitions:
Important Steps in Poster Process

- Identify original research contributions
- Consult with poster design experts, review multiple formats, explore possibilities
- Outline posters on white board as well as on screen
- Include peer review by faculty and other experts
- Print the posters full size and review them carefully (!)
- Select graphics to enhance and illustrate the research
- Combine posters with other forms of writing / analysis
1. Significance of TB in US/VA History
   - Fear of "White Plague"
   - # of deaths
   - Public Health Campaigns
     - PATRIOTS RIGHTS
     - Scientific Advancement
     - Religion & Morality
   - 1934
   - 1968
   - 1971
2. Victim profile
   - Census + Newspapers
   - What they did while sick
   - Family - who else died
   - Class
   - Age
   - Gender
   - Occupation
   - maybe discrimination of Chinese/other (??)
   - maybe difference of Chautauqua obit (??)
   - Immigration
   - Civil War (war comparisons)
   - prisoners (those in jail w/consumption)
Content: texts, graphics, analysis, data, and design integrated into a public outcome

Connections: students working in groups, consulting with designers, paying attention to audience, all building awareness of the public nature of the research process

One student’s assessment of research project: creating posters makes you think about what you are learning