

Call for Papers
Technology and the Patient Consumer

McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
June 3-4, 2020

Recent work in the history of medicine has focused on both technology in medicine and patients as consumers. Schlich/Crenner (2017), for example, have looked at meanings and mechanisms of technological change in surgery, while Alex Mold (2015) and Nancy Tomes (2016) have explored major changes in how patients seek medical information and treatment in U.S. and British healthcare since the late nineteenth century. Such works demonstrate the broad variety of possibilities encompassed by the category of “patient consumer” and various ways of investigating technology in medicine. They also suggest a number of intersecting questions and approaches for historians of science, medicine, and technology.

This workshop aims to bring together these fields of inquiry to explore how patient consumers have influenced technology in medicine. It queries how patients have chosen between different diagnostic and therapeutic technologies (procedures, devices, substances, etc.), how they have rejected or appropriated them, and how they have prompted or supported their development and use from the late nineteenth century to the present. In addition to tracing regional and temporal variations, the workshop will consider how critical differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability have shaped patients’ relationships to medical technologies and consumerism. Situating this history in the many places where patients appear—including, but not limited to, domestic and clinical spaces—we draw upon the broader tools available in the history of science, medicine, and technology, and science and technology studies.

Abstracts should be 300 words, with a title, name and institutional affiliation, and three keywords to describe your proposed paper. Speakers will deliver papers approximately 25 minutes in length, with time for Q&A, and participate in a two-day workshop in Montreal, Canada. The organizers are currently in the process of applying for funding to defray travel costs for participating scholars. Please send submissions with an updated CV to <conf2020@mcgill.ca> by the deadline of November 1, 2019, 5:00pm, EST. We will get back to you about your submission by December 20, 2019.