# Title: Anecdotes of Medical Philosophy 300 years ago from Ramazzini

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## Abstract

Bernardino Ramazzini lived and worked in Modena and Padua, Italy, around the turn of the 16th Century. He published a collection of his orations and notes in 1710 called "The Health of Princes." The book deals with public health in respect of the lifestyle, environment and medical treatment of both simple country folk and nobility.

This presentation will present my analyses of Ramazzini's writings and observations about fevers, health in general, and life style in Italy 300 years ago with a discussion of the medical treatments provided.

Ramazzini was fond of relating medical anecdotes and theories. He published extensively, so much so, that his publisher grew weary of his prescientific writing, saying the doctors wanted to read about clinical guidance rather than "theories". As a result, Ramazzini had to pay for the publication of the last chapter of the "Health of Princes" himself.

Ramazzini had strong opinions on the common blood-letting practice of the time - and unlike many of his colleagues was not in favour of this as a panacea. He relates his treatment success in the section "Epidemic Constitutions of Modena over a five year period (1690), where the patient - a poor farmer - was suffering from a "double tertian fever" with parotitis, and how "without taking any other kind of remedy, his good health was restored by drinking abundant wine."

The possible medical background and mechanism of the treatment used in this case, among others is discussed.

The presentation will compare the medical thought and practice in Ramazzini's day with today and distil, from the book some guiding principles still relevant for current public health.