**Cradle to Grave**

**Lecture 7 – Challenges of Youth**

* Adolescence defined as period between puberty (11-13) and adulthood (18). Sometimes 14-25 (Elizabeth Roberts).
* Not received as much historical attention from historians of medicine as other topics like childhood. This is changing – H. Marland, *Health and Girlhood in Britain* (2013).
* Youth and youth culture, as well as the concept of the ‘teenager’, is seen as a 20th century phenomenon.

1. Medical Debates about Youth and Adolescence 1880-1930

* Joseph Mortimer Granville - *‘Youth’: Its Care and Culture* (1880). Detailed the challenges of youth.
* Ideas about the ‘fixed fund of energy’ – Edward E. Clarke and Henry Maudsley.
* *Fortnightly Review* – Henry Maudsley v’s Elizabeth Garrett
* Maudsley – mental and physical education would damage women’s reproductive health
* Garett – menstruation normal. Lack of mental and physical stimulation more dangerous.
* Eugenicists:
* Robert Reid Rentoul, *The Dignity of Woman’s Health* (1980) – activities should end at puberty.
* G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (1904). For boys a period of ambition and growth. For girls a period of instability.
* Arabella Kenealy, *Feminism and Sex-Extinction* (1902). Adolescence a chrysalis stage starting age 12, accompanied by hysteria and disabilities.

2. Menstruation, Hysteria and Anorexia

* **Menstruation** surrounded by superstition, myth and taboo, and considered unclean.
* Onset of menstruation seen as a dangerous and risky time for girls.
* Medical Women’s Federation (1916) – tried to disseminate useful advice on menstruation.
* **Hysteria** was a 19th/20th century disease associated with behavioural and emotional dysfunction arising from the reproductive system. Brought on by over-activity. MC disease.
* **Anorexia** was first defined by Sir William Gull in 1874. Characterised by failure to eat (esp. meat), emaciation, hyperactivity and associated with female wilfulness. MC disease.

3. The Dangers of Youth

* **Overwork** – thought to be dangerous for boys as well as girls. Clement Dukes, Health at School (1905).
* **Masturbation** – Considered an unhealthy habit which drained the body’s energy (Dukes & Maudsley).
* **Delinquency** – Increasing use of psychology to defined ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ behaviour. New juvenile courts and rehabilitation centres set up. 1908 children act.
* **Venereal disease** – Concerns grew about syphilis and gonorrhoea on the troops in world war 1 and 2. Blamed on the ‘good time girl’.

Changing Ideas and Experiences of Youth 1920-1960

* ‘New woman’ – new ideas about femininity and female education became more common at higher levels.
* Change in fashions from tight corsets to less constricting clothing.
* Improvements in menstrual hygiene – disposable towels, tampons, and increased education. New focus on menstrual ‘ability’.
* Diet – getting better so people getting fatter. BUT – increasing fashions for slim frames. Caused increase in instance of diseases like anorexia and bulimia.
* First teenagers in the 1950s/60s (David Fowler)? Earlier beginnings?