

A Change in the Presentation of Medical Information Between 1905 and 2021 in Alma,

MI

Introduction

Media in the year 1905 dealt with public health issues by offering religious condolences and quick-fix medication advertisement, whereas today, there are more regulations placed on published medical information and the public is generally more skeptical when information is presented by the media. Although some similarities have carried over in reference to death announcements, there are obvious differences in the reporting of medical information. This is due to an increase in regulation of information by the FDA.

Differences and Similarities

1. Obscure illness struck Alma in 1905 and the media emphasized religious nature of death. It was explained that “skilled physicians from all parts of the state have failed to attach the blame to any particular thing.” Another portion of the article explained “[t]he prayer went up from many a heart that God might spare any other who lay at death’s door.”
2. Medication advertisement was less regulated in 1905. An article titled “blood disease cured” claimed to have fixes for urinary, bladder, and kidney diseases
3. The FDA (est. 1906) currently requires some regulation of drug advertisement to give the user accurate and complete information. Ads must contain risks, generic and trade name of drug, and one approved use.
4. Obituaries are displayed in local newspapers. Consistent with today’s local newspapers, death announcements were included in The Almanian.

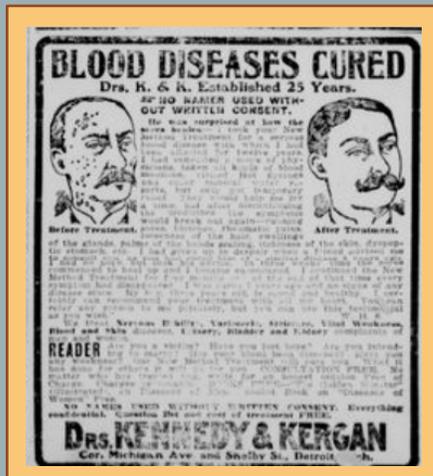


Fig. 1- A medical advertisement taken from the January 6th edition of the Alma Records in 1905.

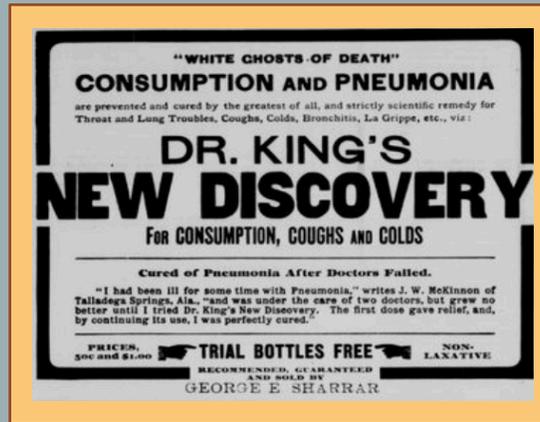


Fig. 2- A medical advertisement taken from the March 31st edition of the Alma Records in 1905.



Fig. 3- An example of a current advertisement for a heart medication.

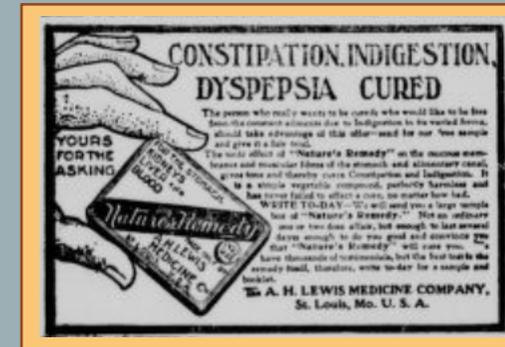


Fig. 4- A medical advertisement taken from the January 6th edition of the Alma Records in 1905.

A Shift in Advertising

A comparison of advertisements between 1905 and 2021 best explains the regulatory changes that have occurred through the years. The advertisements from 1905 describe more personal accounts of using medication whereas the newer advertisement explains things in a more scientific way. What comes to mind when comparing these images and which one do you trust most?

Conclusion

Religion, in terms of medicine, was a more prevalent discussion in media during 1905, medication advertisements have progressively become more regulated by the FDA, and in both years, deaths were announced in local newspapers to be considered public knowledge.

References

- The Almanian
- The Food and Drug Administration
- The Alma Records