HEALTH INTERVENTIONS AGAINST THE SMALLPOX DURING THE TWO EPIDEMICS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY IN FERRARA (ITALY)

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Dedicated to Antoine-Augustin Parmentier

Health interventions against the smallpox during the two epidemics of the second half of the 19th Century were outlined. In the Resoconto statistico Sanitario dell’Arcispedale of 1871 and in the Relazione medica sui Vaiuolosi curati nell’Arcispedale e nel Lazzaretto di Ferrara inclusivamente dal 6 gennaio 1891 al 15 gennaio 92 (Statistical health reports by Alessandro Bennati in 1871 and 1891-1892) data were reported, together with very interesting matter about the cures and remedies of the time.

The treatment of this illness couldn’t be and was nothing else but symptomatic, as there wasn’t a real cure to stop it in fact. It was rather possible to find other remedies by lightening pain and regaining energy during the various stages of the disease.

A certain relationship between the vaccination and the gravity of the illness was underlined. When the practice of vaccination started to be widely employed, there were almost zero cases of death at the end of the century.

The pharmacopoeias of the time, Antonio Campana’s Farmacopea ferrarese in particular, resulted as essential guidelines in the analysis of each document.