

Between Institutionalized Medicine and Popular Medicine: Circulation of Practices, Knowledges, and Agents in the Ibero-American World, Sixteenth-Twentieth Centuries

Historia Crítica, a journal published by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia), announces a call for papers for its thematic issue “Between Institutionalized Medicine and Popular Medicine: Circulation of Practices, Knowledges, and Agents in the Ibero-American World, Sixteenth-Twentieth Centuries.” This issue will feature the participation of Dr. Astrid Dahhur (IICS-UCA, Argentina), Dr. Mariano Di Pasquale (IEH-UNTREF/Conicet, Argentina), and Dr. Lisette Varón Carvajal (Universidad de los Andes, Colombia) as editors.

**Articles will be received from February 1 to March 15, 2026.
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This thematic issue explores the circulation of medical practices and knowledges in Ibero-America from the sixteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. The goal is to examine the various forms of dialogue, cooperation, and tension between institutional medicine and so-called popular medicine. We welcome submissions that analyze, from a situated perspective, both the development of different healing practices and the diverse actors involved as their producers and consumers. This dossier aims to contribute to the recent historiographical shift that, instead of studying the professionalization of medicine and the practice of popular medicine as separate paths, has demonstrated that these have never been clearly distinct spheres. Instead, they have historically been part of a dynamic knowledge circulation and feedback system.

This dossier rejects teleological views that endorse narratives of linear and inevitable progress toward the institutionalization of medical knowledge. It distances itself from perspectives that see the dissemination of science in Ibero-America as a one-way process, created in a “center” and passively adopted in the “periphery.” At the same time, it encourages a critical look at approaches that narrow the history of medicalization by excluding practitioners of popular medicine, ignoring that many of these actors continued to negotiate spaces for action and were not entirely displaced by professionals.

The broad timeframe proposed addresses the need to observe how, despite significant political, social, economic, and cultural changes that transformed health and disease management across different parts of Ibero-America, the permeability of boundaries between institutional medicine and popular medicine has remained constant. Both in early modernity and the modern era, medicine aimed to clearly define its professional scope, but it never gained complete control over what occurred at its edges or over those who crossed them. This thematic issue proposes examining these gray areas to deepen our understanding of what has been regarded as medical knowledge and who has been recognized—or has disputed recognition—as its producers.

With the early arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas, extensive contact between different healing arts occurred. Although it is impossible to speak of cohesive and clearly delimited medical traditions as strictly “Indigenous,” “European,” or “African,” it is clear that this significant cultural encounter or clash led to an unprecedented exchange of ideas. While Europeans tried to impose order and control over forms of knowledge they deemed subordinate, the reality is that during the colonial period, a diverse group of people—doctors, surgeons, barbers, midwives, healers, and other health agents—practiced medicine (and related professions) with relative freedom and gained social recognition. This early context invites reflection on the blurry line between formal medical institutionalism and informal practices, set against a backdrop of fluidity and convergence of different ways of understanding and engaging with the world.

This diversity of knowledges and actors—what authors such as Marcos Cueto, Steven Palmer, and David Sowell have called “medical pluralism”—survived the regime change and the processes of medical professionalization that began in the second half of the eighteenth century. Later, although the second half of the nineteenth century marked a break in medical and institutional discourses when popular medicine became the “enemy to be defeated,” it persisted and adapted to new contexts. Even well into the twentieth century, a humanistic view of medicine, understood as the art of healing, continued to exist. The tension between this humanistic outlook and its growing scientific focus, which emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, represented another key moment for examining how legitimate ways of accessing knowledge were negotiated and which ones were challenged during the broad period covered by this dossier.

The thematic issue invites submissions of articles that specifically focus on some of the following topics:

- Legal action against health agents accused of practicing medicine illegally.
- Participation of popular medicine agents as medical experts in criminal and civil trials.
- Dialogue and collaboration between agents of popular medicine and those of informal medicine.
- Medical practices and health agents in rural and urban areas.
- Tensions during the medicalization process between certified and non-certified agents involved in institutions and public debates.

- The medical practices of various groups (women, Indigenous people, Afro-descendants), their relationship (coexistence, cooperation, rivalry) with formal medicine, or their experiences with the medicalization of society.
- Circulation of medical knowledges and practices related to diseases across regional, imperial, and, eventually, national borders.
- Diseases, sick people, and healthcare policies.
- Representations and discourses on institutional medicine and its counterpart, “popular” medicine, from various perspectives such as philosophy, literature, art, and anthropology.

We invite interested parties to submit unpublished articles in Spanish, English, or Portuguese. Articles should be submitted in Word format for Windows and adhere to the Journal’s standards: a maximum length of 11,000 words (approximately 18-22 pages), 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced, letter size, with 3 cm margins on all sides. Author information must be provided in a separate file.

Authors must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* standards adapted by the Journal for footnotes and bibliography.

Detailed manuscript submission guidelines are available at <https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/hiscrit/editorial-policy>

Failure to follow the submission and citation guidelines will lead to automatic rejection of the article.

Articles must be submitted via OJS using the link available on the Journal’s website during the call for papers period:

<https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/index.php/hiscrit/about/submissions>

Articles submitted to *Historia Crítica* cannot be under review by another publication simultaneously.