

**‘BLOOD TRANSFUSION’
DICTIONNAIRE DES SCIENCES MEDICALES**

By: MONFALCON

A TRANSLATION BY PHIL LEAROYD

The ‘transfusion’ entry, written by a person named only as ‘Monfalcon’*, as part of the section on ‘Blood’, within the ‘Dictionary of Medical Sciences’ (reference volume 49, page 506) by Une Société de Médecins et de Chirurgiens, published in 1820 in Paris by Panckoucke, can be viewed or downloaded from the following site:

https://archive.org/details/BIUSante_47661x49/page/506/mode/1up

* NOTE: Although the entry is credited to ‘Monfalcon’, the name is identified as ‘Montfalcon’ in the list of contributors at the beginning of the volume.

This very short entry on ‘blood transfusion’ within the dictionary’s entry on ‘Blood’, is of significance in that it identifies that transfusion was thought of as a practical possibility only after the discovery of the circulation and for the fact that it mentions that the ‘court of Rome’ forbid transfusion**, as well as the Paris judiciary making it illegal without the consent of the Paris Medical Faculty.

** See: Jones, D.A. (2021) Did the Pope ban blood transfusion in 1678? *British Journal of Haematology*, 195, 5, 698-702.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/bjh.17641>

I have produced a translation of this dictionary entry from the original French into English to hopefully enable its content to be appreciated by a wider audience. Whilst I am obviously aware that instantaneous computer generated translation is available, this process however struggles with accurately reading the original text and interpreting specialist terminology, as well as producing a ‘colloquial style’ not always representative of the original text. In addition, an ‘automatic translation’ may either purposely or inadvertently alter the wording to ‘make it read better’ but in doing so there has to be an element of interpretation involving something on the lines of ‘I believe that this is what the author is actually trying to say’. I want to avoid that as much as possible and try to present what the author actually wrote and as a result the reader may find that the English text does not ‘flow’ as well as it could. Although I have taken great care in accurately identifying the original text and producing a true representative translation of the author’s original wording I cannot guarantee that this work does not contain ‘translational errors’ and the reader is recommended to check specific details against the original text.

I have maintained the original paragraph settings and general layout of the text within the translation. People’s names have been reproduced as originally printed.

Blood transfusion. When William Harvey, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, had discovered the circulation, a doctor imagined that, in order to cure the most stubborn diseases, he would substitute for tainted blood that of a healthy and vigorous man, and to restore to old men the vigour of their youth, to renew their blood entirely by replacing it with that of a young animal or better still of a child or an adolescent. Christopher Wren seems to have been the first to conceive this strange idea; however, some authors attribute it to Richard Lower. At first, the renewal of blood was tried on animals, which was called *transfusion, transfusory surgery*; but two years after it had been executed by Lower on dogs, it was dared, in 1667, to be tried in Paris on men. The experiment either had no success, or caused very serious accidents, such as delirium, acute fever, etc. The experiments made on animals by Clarke, Bayle, Elsholt, Mayor, King, Emmerez, Riva, Manfredi, etc. did not give any satisfactory results. The authority conceived just alarms, and the transfusion on man was forbidden by a decision of the court of Rome, and, in 1675, by a decree of the parliament of Paris. It would not be permissible today to refute the theory which led to the proposal of transfusion. Perrault, a member of the Academy of Sciences, before which the experiments relating to the transfusion of blood were repeated without success, acquitted himself very well of this task in 1667.

(MONFALCON)