

# THE HISTORY OF GOUT THROUGH CENTURIES

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**INTRODUCTION AND AIM:** Gout is a medical condition which describes a painful form of arthritis that affects people's joints. It is caused by deposition of too much uric acid crystals forming around joints and most often the big toe is affected. (first metatarsophalangeal joint). The aim of this study is to elucidate how physicians perceived this medical condition through centuries.

**METHODS:** We studied recent articles related to the history of gout through different periods.

**RESULTS:**The Ancient Egyptians firstly identified uric acid in 2640 B.C. Hippocrates (460-370 B.C.) recognized gout as the result of an excessive accumulation of one of the four of the bodily humors, phlegm, which affected the joint painfully. He called gout the "unwalkable disease" , the "arthritis of the rich" because of the lifestyle of the rich people including excess food and wine. He also believed that gout occurred in post-pubertal male and post-menopausal women.

Galen, six centuries later (215 AD) described tophi as the manifestation of longstanding gout and hyperuricemia lumps of crystallized uric acid under the skin.

Ruphus of Ephesus ( 1st century) believed that internal organs could become affected by gouty humor and would provoke pulmonary, cerebral and renal failure resulting in death.

Oribasius (400 CE) mentioned that gout affects the feet, while arthritis affects hands, knees, elbow.

Dominican monk Randolphus of Bocking (1197-1258) named gout podagra.. The term is derived from latin word gutta ( drop), which is drop or flow into the joint causing pain and inflammation caused by uric acid crystals forming within the joint.

Antoni van Leeuwenhock (1632-1723) first described microscopically the appearance of crystals from a gouty tophi.

Alfred Garrod (1819-1907) devised the uric acid threat test, which depended on crystallization of urate on linen thread and could be controlled by lowering intake of purine-rich food. At the end of 19th century the use of agents, such as probenecid, fenofibrate, allopurinol, NSAIDs was discovered to induce uricosuria and resolution of tophi.

The German chemist Fischer, who won the Nobel Prize in 1902, discovered that purines found in meat, fish and alcohol are responsible for the development of uric acid.

**CONCLUSIONS:** It' s amazing how physicians describe the same medical condition depending on the knowledge and the technological methods that were available to them. Gout is among the oldest recognized diseases with a profound impact on patient quality of life.

