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Sharing Cases: The *Observationes* in Early Modern Medicine

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This paper examines the rise of an epistemic genre, the *Observationes*, a new form of medical writing that emerged in early modern medicine. The *Observationes* (collections of case-histories) originated in the second half of the sixteenth century, flourished in the seventeenth, and had become a primary form of medical writing by the eighteenth century. The genre developed as a result of advertisement by court and town physicians, who stressed success in practice, over and above academic learning, and the desire for professional identity. This unprecedented emphasis on practice as a source of knowledge remained a key feature of the genre.

subsequent development. As the genre evolved, the original emphasis on therapeutic success gave way to a new knowledge of disease through detailed observation. The authorial identity projected by the writers of *Observation* learned and experienced observer, bent on comparing notes and sharing his cases with the fellow members of the charts the development of the genre, examining how its growth contributed to the new epistemological value of the Scientific Revolution.

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