

The Eighteenth-Century Origins of Angina Pectoris: Predisposing Causes, Recognition and Aftermath

by Leon Michaels

In 1768, William Heberden (1710–1801) made a presentation to the Royal College of Physicians of London describing angina pectoris in a manner readily recognizable to the twentieth-century physician. Previous accounts of symptoms such as those described by Heberden had been extremely few. The thesis of Leon Michaels' work is that, for all practical purposes, angina pectoris was a new, emerging condition that first appeared almost exclusively in England and as a result of the many changes in agriculture, eating habits and living patterns occurring during the eighteenth century. Michaels draws on the research of many disciplines including medical, agricultural and economic history, sociology, demography, and current food chemistry to produce a lucid and well-argued account of the rise of angina pectoris.

Leon Michaels, MD, PhD, FRCP, was a clinical cardiologist and Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Manitoba, Canada. He is currently President of the Manitoba History of Medicine Society.

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