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**Science and Prejudice: a Social History of Epilepsy in Brazilian Early
Medical Academic Writings – 1859 – 1906.**

Margarida de Souza-Neves
History Department
Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro
Brazil

1. Purpose:

The main objective of this research is to study Brazilian medical writings on epilepsy from 1859 (year of the first doctoral thesis about epilepsy in Rio de Janeiro Medical School) to 1906 (Golgi and Ramón y Cajal Nobel Prize, which scientific works changed the physicians approach to epilepsy) in order to identify particular patterns of prejudice and stigmas towards this illness and those who suffer from it, to verify how the prevailing prejudice towards epilepsy present at the time was represented in Brazilian scientific thought and . to identify how specific prejudices, peculiar of a strongly hierarchic and slave-labor based society (until 1888), appear in academic papers.

2. Methods:

Historical analysis of medical doctoral thesis about epilepsy or related subjects and of papers published in Brazilian Medical Journals. Iconography (religious, moral and medical) and literature are considered subsidiary documents.

3. Results:

48 doctoral theses on epilepsy have been studied (76 identified) and their content is very similar, follow the same narrative protocol and the ones produced in Rio de Janeiro are strongly influenced by French physicians. Epilepsy is considered a curse and prejudice towards patients with epilepsy is patent in vocabulary, etiology, treatment procedures, moralizing tone and social issues. Different approaches and public health policy are more openly discussed on Medical Journals (34 titles), where it is possible to identify a lineage of Brazilian physicians, influenced by Cesare Lombroso's theories, linked directly epilepsy to criminal tendencies and had great ascendance in criminology and public health policy.

4. Conclusions:

Further research is required, but it is possible to state that gender, moral and sexual prejudices as well as social stigmas are strongly present in the early Brazilian medical writings about epilepsy, while there is a significant silence about racial issues.

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