

ABSTRACT

Indigenous Medicine and Popular Culture in North India, 1900-1955

Rachel Berger (University of Cambridge)

My research focuses on the politics of indigenous health and health care in colonial North India, juxtaposing the concerns of the imperial and self-governing provincial governments with popular understandings of health found in the Hindi public sphere. I am particularly interested in the way in which issues of gender and sexuality are negotiated in the medical discourse, especially in the resurrection of Ayurvedic medicine and healthcare by contemporary practitioners. I am also interested in the influence of popular discussions of health and medicine on the development of modern Hindi, and the emergence of the Hindi public sphere. Finally, I am exploring the ways in which discussions of health, medicine and the body helped to construct notions of 'difference' and 'belonging' with regard to 'racial', class, religious and ethnic politics.