

# The History of Dental Medicine in Morocco in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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**Abstract:** *One of the most worrying subjects in Morocco has always been its history, in various forms, political, economic, cultural, and scientific, of which the history of medicine was an integral part. According to historical sources, before the protectorate there were no modern dentists, it was the hairdresser who played an important role in empirical medicine; It was he who, apart from circumcision, practiced bleeding in all its forms and often exercised the profession of dentist. Moroccan dentistry as a medical discipline and, on the contrary, of general medicine, began to thrive only belatedly during the protectorate. This period was marked by the emergence of the first texts governing the profession. Since then, this discipline has continued to evolve. Currently the practice of dentistry in Morocco is governed by laws, the oldest of which dates from 1960, and the most recent in 2007.*

**Keywords:** Dentistry, Barber, Protectorate, Independence, Law texts

## 1. Introduction

Our knowledge of the past is based on several criteria: the subject, the questions asked and the bibliographic resources. Historians have agreed that the best approach to historical study is to make maximum use of archives and resources [1].

For the doctor, research is an element of culture that enriches the clinical observation of diseases and therapeutics.

The geographical situation of Morocco and its location between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic has not failed to influence the historical destinies of Morocco which assumed very early the role of mediator and synchronizer between several worlds while keeping its cultural specificity.

One of the most worrying subjects in Morocco has always been its history, in various forms, political, economic, cultural, and scientific, of which the history of medicine was an integral part. Nothing could be more remarkable than the fact that the beginning of the French occupation of modern Morocco was triggered by the death of Dr. Mauchamp in Marrakech in 1907. To do this we chose to take the early 20th century because of the scarcity of works concerning this period which will enable us to analyze the state of dentistry in Morocco.

## 2. The History of Dental Medicine in Pre-Colonial Morocco

It is difficult to say exactly when the history of dentistry in Morocco begins. The ancient Moroccans already practiced dentistry work. Moroccan medicine had its apogee period especially in the 12th century under the influence of Muslim Spain, but Moroccan medicine quickly experienced the most complete decline and the absence of any objective training or regulation specific to the profession. Until the arrival of the French protectorate in 1912.

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an important role in empirical medicine; it was he who, apart from circumcision, practiced bleeding in all its forms and often exercised the profession of dentist [2].

### 2.1 Types of pathologies [3]:

At that time, the “*Pistacialentiscus*” bark was used as a mouthwash and was the popular remedy for toothache; in default we use the walnut root, or the vinegar boiled with walnut.

In the case of dental caries; the safest and most commonly used treatment in this case was avulsion operated with the instruments described above.

However, some traditional dentists dress the tooth with a mixture of garlic, salt, horseradish and honey, or make a filling, composed of basil root “*JaouzRayhan*”, soaked in milk, which they place in the hole and cover of wax.

### 2.2 Instruments used:

Dentists used several instruments, for example:

- Suction cups [4]: They were of several kinds. Sometimes it is an ordinary glass, or a goblet made of zinc, a horn of ox; in most cases an apparatus is employed, also in the shape of a truncated cone, which is flared at its lower part, and which is provided near the base of a vacuum tube. Once the scarification is done, the suction cup is applied; burning paper or old rags, and the doctor aspires to the blood. It is essentially behind the head that the cups are placed; the patient requires this type of treatment to rid him of dizziness, pain or impaired vision. Suction cups are also used for affections of the stomach, for dental fluxions, and for arthritis of the knee.
- The davits: they were in several forms according to which one wants to tear away anterior or posterior teeth; some come from Europe, others were traditionally made by Moroccan workers. There was a fairly original davit, arranged so that with 3 branches it can make 2 davits. Some Jewish barbers playing the role of dentist possess a Garengéot key.
- Scissors: they were used especially for circumcisions.

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- The clamps.

### 2.3 Types of Treatment [5]

In Morocco at the time, stones called "precious stones" were used which were regarded as preserving evil and able to cure all diseases, even scabies, leprosy, plague, fever.

The authors of the time quoted the properties attributed to each of these precious stones. Mention is made, as an example, of the Turquoise, against toothache.

### 2.4 Practice locations [6]

Traditional dentists practiced in the souks, and practiced their art with great finesse. They use pliers and davits. These dentists are at the same time, and above all, barber. They practice bleeding and apply suction cups.

## 3. The Evolution in the Period of the Protectorate

Moroccan dentistry as a medical discipline and, on the contrary, of general medicine, began to thrive only belatedly during the protectorate [7]. This period was marked by the emergence of the first texts governing the profession. At the beginning of the protectorate a decree of the Pasha of Rabat, taken after agreement and approval by the various consuls of the city concerned, prohibits the practice of medicine, pharmacist, dentist or midwife without the authorization of the pasha, The administrative control authority of the district, which authority shall be issued on the production of diplomas, the regularity of which shall have been verified by the consul in the country of origin of the person concerned. Similar orders have been made in other cities of Morocco [8].

The first law regulating the practice of medical professions came into being in 1916[9]. Indeed the aim of this law was to protect Moroccans and foreigners against the companies of those who claim to cure or sell drugs without having the necessary knowledge and skills. Dentists who do not possess a doctor's degree shall refrain from any operations other than those performed routinely in the practice of their profession [10]. The European dentists settled in Morocco, in the late thirties there were ten dental clinics in Rabat. What makes the European dentist superior to the native dentist is that the European dentist necessarily knows all the chemicals that calm, suppress pain and do not alter the tissues. They were good especially in the restoration of the dental apparatus compromised by the various diseases of the teeth [11]. Around 1937 in "port-Lyautey" (Kenitra), there were two dentists [12].

The creation of the council of the Order of Physicians in Morocco was born in 1951. Agreements with France and Spain, as well as the adoption of a regulation ending the international status of the city of Tangier, allow Morocco to reach full independence [13].

Despite these efforts, dental care was considered a luxury for most Moroccans who had only the barber and the teeth shredder.

The period of independence after 1956 saw the organization of the profession of dental surgeon by publishing numerous texts of fundamental laws, allowing a generalization of the regulations to the whole kingdom and a reorganization of the order Professional and the framework of practice within public hospital formations.

The promulgation of the Dahir regulating the medical professions was made in 1960 and the publication of the Dahir of mutuality creating the mutual societies was in 1963. The faculties of dentistry was created in Morocco thereafter in order to answer the need for training in dentists, emerged in the face of an expanding society, and ever-increasing curative and preventive dental needs.

## 4. Conclusion

Dental medicine in Morocco as a medical discipline has generally benefited from recognition at the outset of the protectorate. But since, this discipline has not stopped evolving. Currently the practice of dentistry in Morocco is governed by laws, the oldest of which dates from 1960, and the most recent in 2007.

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