

The Indian Lancet

The growth of publications of scientific periodicals in India has attracted the attention of a number of researchers^{1,2}. Medical periodicals published from India have a special significance in the light of the conditions of health and diseases that affected the Europeans in India. India under the British rule offered a territory to study tropical diseases. On the other hand, the natives of India enlightened by the acquaintance of modern science and technology (S&T), wanted to utilize the knowledge of the Western S&T (especially in medicine) in the service of their countrymen. At the same time, there was an urge to re-evaluate the Indian S&T of medicine in the light of the Western methods and to place the indigenous knowledge before the practitioners of the Western medical science.

Thus there were articles on medical science in general periodicals such as *Asiatick Researches* and the publication of specialized periodicals in medical sciences both in English and Indian vernaculars³⁻⁵. As far we know, the first periodical from India on medical science was *The Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta*, first issued in 1825. According to Sen¹, till 1900 there were 210 Indian periodicals on medical science. These periodicals included Allopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani and other streams of medical science. Sen mentions a periodical entitled *Indian Lancet or Medical Officers Journal* published from Lahore; apparently issued first in August 1859 and terminated in July 1861. We have not been able to get a copy of this journal. Sen has not provided any more detail, nor does he indicate where a copy of this journal may be available.

We have however come across a few copies of another journal, *The Indian Lancet*. The title page gives the name with subtitle 'A Fortnightly Journal of Medicine, Surgery, Public Health, and of General Medical Intelligence'. The journal published original research articles, current medical literature, special correspondences, and 'a mirror of practices'. A title index was also included in every issue just after the title page of the concerned volume. Each volume was divided into several chapters according to the month. At the end of the each chap-

ter, there were Government medical notifications which consisted of topics such as Gazette of India, Retirements, Appointments and Promotions in Medical Departments.

Advertisements mainly related to medical products were also found, for example, Terrol (Hydrocarbon oil as a substitute for cod liver oil, The Terrol Co Ltd, London, vol. xiii, pp. 26–27). A good number of scholarly articles were written by Indian scholars, for example, 'Roy, Sarada Kanta. The Fever of Bengal' (1899, vol. xiii, pp. 496–498). We have seen volumes 12, 13 and 15. The details of which are given in Table 1.

These volumes were edited by Lawrence Fernandez, MD. It was printed in Calcutta at the Indian Lancet Press, with address at 6, Royd Street. Every volume covered six months and 12 issues. If vol. 12 pertained to July–December 1898, then vol. 11 had to be for the period January–June 1898. With back-calculation, the starting volume appears to be January–June 1893. Sen¹ has made an entry for *Medical Reporter*, vol. 1 (January

1892) to vol. 6, no. 8 (1895) continued as *The Indian Lancet*, vol. 6, no. 9 (1895) to vol. 31, no. 17 (April 1908), Medical Association of India, Calcutta¹. We have not been able to ascertain whether this is the same journal as the one we have found. This is because the starting year does not coincide, unless there has been a gap somewhere. A replication of the title page of vol. xii, July–December 1898 is shown in Figure 1.

Interested and informed readers may supply more information about the journal. It appears that this journal had no relation with *The Lancet* published from London by The Lancet Publishing Ltd (first issued in 1823 as weekly, now published by Elsevier)⁶. Mridula Ramana⁷ in her book *Western Medicine and Public Health in Colonial Bombay: 1845–1895* has cited the journal *The Indian Lancet*, vol. 12, July–December 1895. She has not provided any more details about this journal. We have not been able to ascertain whether this is the same journal as the one we have found, because the publishing year of vol. 12 does not coincide; neither does it match with the data of Sen.

Table 1. Details regarding three volumes of *The Indian Lancet*

Volume	Year	Pages
XII	1898 (July–December)	522
XIII	1899 (January–June)	520
XV	1900 (January–June)	520

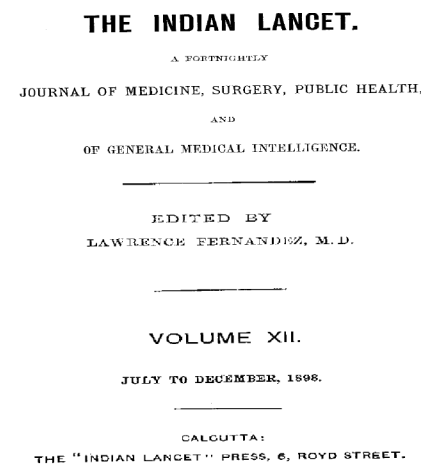


Figure 1. Title page of the *The Indian Lancet*.

1. Sen, B. K., *Growth of Scientific Periodicals in India (1788–1900)*, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 2002.
2. Sen, S. N. and Chatterjee, S., *Indian J. Hist. Sci.*, 1992, **27**, s1–s77; 1993, **28**, s79–s452.
3. Neelameghan, A., *Development of Medical Societies and Medical Periodicals in India 1780 to 1920*, IASLIC, Kolkata, 1963.
4. Roy, B., *Chikitsavyagyaner Itihas: (History of Medical Science)* (in Bengali), Sahityaloke, Kolkata, 2005.
5. Basu, A. K., *Indian J. Hist. Sci.*, 1982, **17**, 326–332.
6. *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, R.R. Bowker, New York, 2005, 44th edn.
7. Ramana, Mridula, *Western Medicine and Public Health in Colonial Bombay: 1845–1895*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2002, p. 38.

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