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Running head: Medicine Faces of the Greek and Roman Medicine Early Greek Medicine Ancient people of Greece have given more importance to the health of the people and hence they were keen in developing medicines. Religion has influenced a lot in developing medical practices in ancient Greece. The Cult of Asclepius was a major provider of medical care which developed old theories and introduced several treatments not too dissimilar from modern alternative medicines. Hippocrates, the father of medicine was from Greece whose theory of the Four Humours was, for a long time, the basis upon which to develop medical reasoning. Likewise the methodology employed by the Greeks has, to a large extent, been retained and modified to form what we now consider to be conventional medicine. (Ancient Greek Medicine, 2002) Romans had a strong relationship with Greece and the Greek medicines, especially the Hippocratic, were popular among Romans as well

### Hippocratic Medicine

Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician is considered as the father of medicine and still all the medical students in the world take the Hippocratic Oath as a matter of respect to this greatest contributor to the medical field. Hippocrates is believed to be the first one who rejected the idea of the involvement of supernatural as the cause of diseases. He was the one who was able to separate the medicine from religion. As per the ancient beliefs, diseases were considered as the curses of God. Hippocrates has proved that diseases were happened due to reasons other than the one taught by the religion and he considered medicine as a science rather than religion.

The Hippocratic writings introduced patient confidentiality, a practice which is still in use today. " Hippocrates recommended that physicians record their <https://assignbuster.com/history-lindeberg-david-c-2007-the-beginnings-of-western-science-2nd-ed-university-of-chicago-press/>

findings and their medicinal methods, so that these records may be passed down and employed by other physicians. Other Hippocratic writings associated personality traits with the relative abundance of the four humours in the body: phlegm, yellow bile, black bile, and blood, and was a major influence on Galen and later on medieval medicine”(Hippocrates)

### Hellenistic Anatomy & Physiology

ANATOMY is the study, classification, and description of structures and organs of the body. PHYSIOLOGY is the study and process of the function of the human. It is the study of the physical and chemical processes involved in the functioning of the living organisms and their component parts. (Karin & David)

In the Hellenistic era the foundation of the city of Alexandria implied from the very beginning an intensive and very productive interaction between the Egyptian cultural heritage and the Greek civilization and culture. Erasistratos was recognized as one of the most famous neurologists in the Hellenistic period. He attempted to combine Microanatomy with Neurophysiology. Erasistratos studied and described the cortex of the brain, describing the morphology of the gyri and the sulci of the surface of the brain and claiming that the centers of the higher mental faculties are located in the cortex of the brain hemispheres. He noticed also that the difference between the human brain and the brain of the animals is mostly based on the number of the gyri, which are more numerous in man than in animals, which is presumably related to the superior cognition of humans. (BALOYANNIS)

During the period of Hippocratic physicians, the knowledge about human anatomy and physiology were very less. The study of a dead body was not considered as a serious issue for the development of treatment or medicine  
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was not taken seriously during this period. Human dissection was begun in the third century of BC in Alexandria. (Lindberg, p. 119)

#### Galen & the culmination of Hellenistic Medicine

In A. D. 129 Galen studied philosophy and mathematics before he decided to shift his focus to medicine at the age of 16. Galen took the doctrine of four humours -the view that human body is made of blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. He believed that the four humours together form tissues; tissues form organs; and the organs make the body. He also believed that the diseases were caused due to the disequilibrium of humours. Galen has used pulses and examination of urine heavily to determine the causes of diseases. (Lindberg, p. 125&126)

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