

Foundation for History of Physiotherapy **Physiotherapy in perspective, 50 years past - present.**



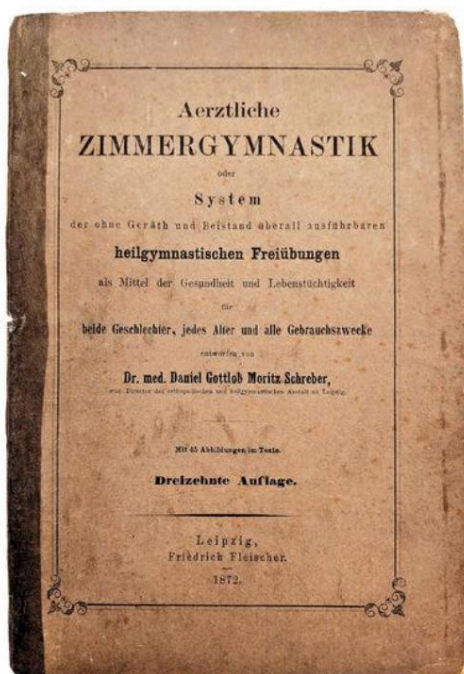
STICHTING GESCHIEDENIS FYSIOTHERAPIE
www.sgfinfo.nl

“Medical Chamber Gymnastics”, a forgotten exercise method.

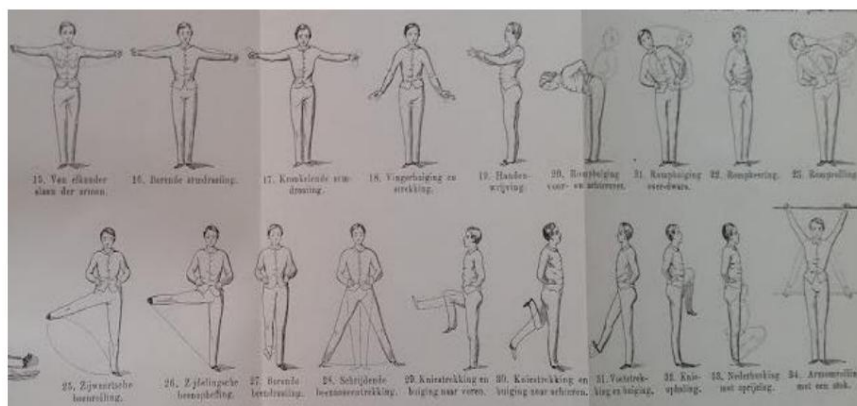
Text: Huub Vossen PT, MMT, Dr. Anthony de Wijer.

Introduction

Selecting a number of books that arrive at the History of Physiotherapy Foundation is like a journey through the history of physiotherapy. Devices, books, but also people are reviewed here that we sometimes don't know exist. For example, a board member of the SGF, Rob Karstens, came across a remedial gymnastics method, called the *“Medical Chamber Medicine according to Dr. Schreiber”*.¹ It concerned a Dutch translation of the book 'Aerztliche Zimmergymnastics', which was frequently published in Germany.²



Book 'Aerztliche Zimmergymnastics', 13th edition, from dr. med. Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreiber. Leipzig, 1872.



The book, translated into Dutch by Dr. Schreiber published contains many illustrated examples of the Medical Chamber Gymnastics.

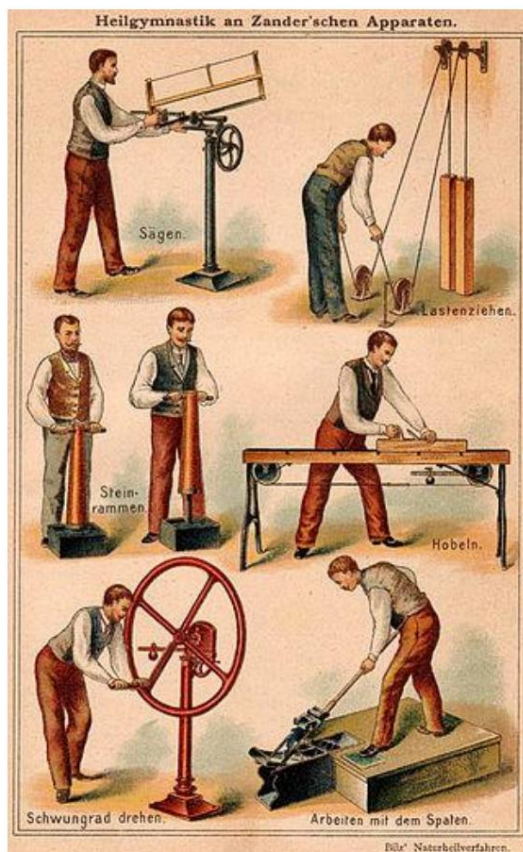
It is worth delving further into this, partly because this method and person was until now completely unknown in the annals of Dutch physiotherapy. We

discovered how current the ideas of Dr. Schreber from the 19th century are still found today.

The Context of Room Gymnastics

To get an idea of what is meant by 'Medical Chamber Gymnastics' we need to go back in time. This is to better understand the context from which people thought and acted about healing gymnastics at the end of the 19th century. A article from the Dutch. Journal of Medicine by Dr. Tilanus, lecturer in surgery at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) illustrates the importance of 'mechano-therapy', a form of remedial gymnastics as part of medicine (Medical Chamber Gymnastics).

³ Actually, Tilanus prefers to use the word kinesiotherapy instead of mechano-therapie.



Rehabilitation exercises in the form of mechanotherapy as part of the Medical Chamber Medicine.

Tilanus wanted to convince his fellow doctors of the importance of 'mechanotherapy' or 'kinesiotherapy' as a medicine for many ailments. His own criticism of medicine in the 19th century was that too little use was made of this form of remedial gymnastics in the Netherlands. ³ *"The Chinese are already 3000 years BC. familiar with this form of exercise"*: was Tilanus's plea and also Dr. Mezger from Amsterdam kudos to Tilanus because he put massage and healing gymnastics on the map in the Netherlands.³

In the article, Tilanus further discusses the different forms of chamber gymnastics originating from Swedish gymnastics. ³ The method of Dr. Schreber jumps from this the most eye-catching. The main arguments put forward by Tilanus are the *"physiological significance of physical exercises"* and the preventive effect of the

'Medical Room Gymnastics' to prevent diseases of affluence (obesity, type 2 diabetes, etc.). How recognizable is in the recommendations of organizations today?

Furthermore, Tilanus believes it is important to practice 'room gymnastics' as a medicine against the health problems resulting from the one-sided workload that occurred in the 19th century.

century had risen through industrialization. Could company physiotherapy be born here?

However, it does not stop in his multifaceted plea. Also, according to Tilanus, "room gymnastics" is healthy for mental health (especially the balance between body and mind). Also does Dr.

Tilanus suggestions for those who have nothing to do with this form of healing gymnastics to go horseback riding, tennis, golf, ect. or 3 Also very recognizable in the modern day to look for person. something that suits the interests of the

rehabilitation of this time and in fact already preached in the 19th century.

In the end, Tilanus wanted nothing more than that the Medical Chamber Gymnastics should not be seen separately from all kinds of other means such as massage and respiratory therapy, which according to Tilanus had the same physiological effect, and he wanted to link the Medical Chamber Medicine to the vision of the time.

At the end of the 19th century, chamber gymnastics was a household name and a hype in the Netherlands. It was prescribed 3 times a day before eating. Some orthopedists prescribed this for people who have a busy social life and who often dropped out due to what we call "burn out". Our Prime Minister Abraham Kuyper was familiar with the room gymnastics and performed it consistently and then already met the Dutch standard for Healthy Exercise by taking a half hour walk every day before going to work.

like what dr Schreber (1808-1861)

dr. Schreber, was a doctor-lecturer at the University of Leipzig and also director of the sanatorium, Heilanstalt in Leipzig. Schreber was one of the doctors who uses the Medical Chamber Gymnastics. Schreber thought the healing gymnastics from Sweden was too passive (particularly the excercises) and argued in particular for more exercise for the youth. He had similar ideas as Tilanus and with his vision of health he also responded to the zeitgeist, namely the rise of urbanization and the dawn of the industrial revolution. The method of Dr. With the other methods of the Chamber Gymnastics, Schreber is in fact a forerunner of the current fitness, exercise programs and lifestyle programs.



dr DGM Schreber, arts.

It can be deduced from the many books, descriptions, memorial stones and even associations (Schreberverein) that this doctor occupied an important place in German remedial gymnastics.4 There was even talk of a 'Schreber movement'.

What can we learn from it?

First of all, around 1900 we already had many ambassadors in medicine, such as Dr. Schreber but also Dr. Tilanus, who advocated the importance of remedial gymnastics as an important part of medicine. According to Tilanus, remedial gymnastics was used worldwide as a medicine through the ages (Galenus). Healing gymnastics doesn't come out of the blue, we can say.

So the ideas of today's exercise programs and lifestyle interventions are not really new when we read this plea from Tilanus and take a 'journey' through the books of Dr. Schreber that are currently in the possession of the Foundation for History of Physiotherapy in Urk. Apparently somewhere in the past we became estranged from remedial gymnastics as a means of prevention and we mainly know the curative side.

The ideas of the time to use remedial gymnastics as prevention was based on tackling the expected health problems due to urbanization and industrialization.

A very foresight where Dr. In particular, Schreber also added the importance of exercise for youth. Sufficient reports are currently available about the consequences of lack of exercise among young people today.

Prof. dr. Gordijn, founder of gymnastics in the Netherlands, was a guest teacher and advisor at the Academy of Physiotherapy in Arnhem. Besides the importance of 'dancing movement' instead of performance-oriented movement, Gordijn propagated that the movement of students was neglected in the 1970s and 1980s. With his guest lectures in physiotherapy at the Arnhem Academy for Physiotherapy, he then lashed out at the then academies for physical education because Gordijn felt that they made too little effort to promote the importance of gymnastics in schools. School gymnastics was cut back in the 70s and 80s with all the consequences that entailed

and the gymnastics teachers should have stood up in the breach in The Hague to maintain compulsory gymnastics education in schools. These were actually the ideas of Dr. Schreber and had the remedial gymnast, Prof. dr. Curtain this well understood.

Schreber remains current.....and there are also challenges for physiotherapy to continue to develop contemporary exercise methods to continue to use as a means of prevention against the diseases of our time. Will the KNGF become the new Schreber movement?



Schreber was the founder of the vegetable gardens, the so-called "Schreber Garten" as part of being active, which is still a concept in Germany today for the modern lifestyle. The unknown in the Netherlands Dr.

Schreber is currently 'touring' in China (Expo Deutsche Garten 2019) with an audiovisual exhibition where the cultural heritage from the 19th century, especially about his ideas about the vegetable gardens, which are still being promoted.

photo dr. Schreber Exhibition in China 2019 (3rd from left).

References

1. Schreber DTM. Medical room gymnastics, 13e druk. Leipzig, 1872.
2. Schreber DGM. Medical Chamber Medicine. For both can and everyone age. 10th edition. Publisher Tjeenk Willink and Son. Harlem, 1905.
3. Tilanus CB, On Mechanotherapy. Journal of Medicine (26)1889.
4. Helene J. Biography of Dr. Schreber and his method. Dissertation 2005.
5. Carl Christian Friedrich Gordijn (Amsterdam, April 26, 1909 - Otterlo, December 20, 1998).
Source: https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Christian_Friedrich_Gordijn

Article Sources

1. Rob Karsten PT. Physiotherapist and board member of the History of Physiotherapy Foundation (SGF). 2019.
2. Wim Schoemans, MSc, MA. Physiotherapist, philosopher. SGF, 2019.

For information about the **History of Physiotherapy Foundation** , we refer you to the [website of the SGF](#).

