

# Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain: The Crisis of Care under the English Poor Law, c.1834-1900

Kim Price



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*Medical Negligence in Victorian Britain* is the first detailed exploration of the hundreds of charges of neglect against doctors who were contracted to the 'new' poor law after the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The author moves beyond the hyperbole of Victorian public 'scandal' to use medical negligence as a prism through which to view hidden aspects of poor law doctors and their patients. This provides a uniquely grounded perspective, from the day-to-day experience of medical practice – for both doctor and patient – to the context of the medico-political, socio-legal and cultural processes that underpinned the social construction of negligence at this time.

The result is a clearly enunciated description of what negligence meant to the Victorians and how they sought to define and deal with negligent care, moving the topic from the sidelines of English welfare history to the centre-stage role it played in Victorian society. Thematically and chronologically arranged in two parts, the book uses extensive new archival material with a particular focus on the official inquiries into neglect conducted by poor law inspectors. It offers a fresh perspective on the poor laws that has repercussions for wider histories of welfare, medicine and legal medicine.

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