

LETTER TO EDITOR

A Critique of the Article “Consideration of the Quarantine in Bushehr 1905 - 1915 based on Baliuz of Britain Reports”

Dear Editor,

In Journal of “*Research on History of Medicine*”, issue 1, vol.2, 2013 (pp.25-32), an article, entitled “*Consideration of Quarantine Conditions in Bushehr Between 1905 and 1915, Based on Baliuz of Britain Reports*” (Nadim, 2013, pp. 25-32), was published. The article, written by the esteemed author Mr. Mostafa Nadim, seems to suffer some shortcomings. Therefore, the purpose of writing this letter is to discuss those points and prevent the print of distorted information in a scientific research journal. Accordingly, the following points are considered important to be mentioned in this letter:

In this article, the keywords introduced face two major defects. First, the word ‘*quarantine*’ is not used as the English keyword. Second, Persian and English keywords do not match. That is, in English keywords,

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after naming Bahrain, Britain and Bushehr, the keyword “Qajar period” has been used. But in Persian keywords, instead of the keyword “Qajar period”, that of “*quarantine*” has been used.

The next subject is about the use of “Bahrain” as a keyword in the article. By reading the article, we have found that the author mentions Bahrain in only two sentences, on pages 30 and 31. Thus, despite the thematic similarity of the two sentences mentioned, the main focus of the article is not Bahrain and, the word Bahrain should not be used as one of the four main keywords (Persian and English) in the article.

In the introduction of the article, the author discusses the importance of the Persian Gulf for the British government and other countries. But in the next section, he states the quarantine and its history in the world and Iran as the purpose of the research. In fact, this section lacks the main components of the introduction of an academic article: objectives (general and specific), research issue, importance and necessity of research, research records and design of hypotheses (Mollaei Tavani, 2007, p. 205).

In this article, the background of the research is not mentioned and the reader does not know how this research differs from other research done in this field. In fact, the realization of the goals of any research depends on a large extent on the quality of research background, namely analytical and critical review of existing works and research (Mollaei Tavani, 2007, p. 94). Studies show that various authors in the past years have addressed the issue of quarantine in Bushehr and the Persian Gulf during the Qajar period and have explored different parts of the subject (Dehghannejad and Kasiri, 2010, pp. 1-14; Kasiri and Dehghannejad, 2011, pp. 50-62). Hence, it is expected from the writer that he has given references to the studies conducted before.

As the subject of the article is to survey the quarantine related to the epidemics in the ports of Persian Gulf and Bushehr, it has to give a brief history of incidence of infectious disease and the establishment of quarantine in Qajar period. The author has only mentioned the plague in the Persian Gulf in 1876 AD, as if by exploring historical sources related to Qajar period, cases of infectious diseases and control measures would comprise the issue of quarantine in the Persian Gulf, Bushehr and other parts of Iran (Floor, 2008, pp. 15-24; Fraser, 1826, p. 317; Larimer, 2015, p. 52).

The author of the article talks about the quarantine location in Bushehr (page 28):

In existing reports, the word “island” has been often referred to as the quarantine location. “However, because the method of writing the reports was based on brevity, no document has mentioned the exact location of the island.”

In fact, the location of the quarantine, an island near the port of Bushehr,



remains unknown to the author according to Cox reports. But in some books related to the medical history of Iran, the name of this island has been determined. For instance, Floor introduces the quarantine island (Floor, 2008, p. 276) as “Abbasak” and Cyril Lloyd Elgood states that during the plague epidemic in Bushehr during the Qajar period, consular women were transferred to “Basido Island” (Elgood, 1992, pp. 569-576). Therefore, according to these books, Abbasak Island or Basido can be the name of that unknown island.

One of the noteworthy points in the article in terms of writing process is that the writer fails to pay due attention to what comprises a paragraph; that is to say, changing a paragraph implies changing the subject matter. In the article under study, the writer resorts to changing a paragraph for no reason. For example, we can see the following point is unnecessarily written as a new paragraph:

“*In May of this year, 68 cases of plague and 57 deaths due to this disease were reported in Bushehr*” (p. 29).

In the result section of the article, the author has talked about the climatic conditions of the Persian Gulf region as well as the lack of hospitals, doctors and drugs (p. 31). However, there is no evidence of this in the main text of the article and the author has not mentioned the incidence of epidemics here. In fact, as a rule of thumb, in the result section of an article, new findings should not be presented.

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