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"Medicalising Electricity in the Dutch Republic, 1745–1789"

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This article sheds light on the processes and tactics used by eighteenth-century electricians in making medical electricity a legitimate remedy in the Dutch Republic. Electricity's medical value was by no means self-evident in the years following 1746, when the first Dutch patient was treated with it. Understandings of its effects on the body were still unclear and judgements on the efficacy of electrotherapy varied. The subsequent four decades saw the development of various theories, practices, and instruments of electrotherapy across Europe and North America. This development has thus far been little studied in the context of the Dutch Republic, despite the Republic's prominent role in the wider history of electricity. Understanding how electricity became a legitimate component of the Dutch materia medica provides an insight into the ways transnational scientific knowledge is translated in local contexts. (Abstract)

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