History of ECT in Germany

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History of Convulsive Therapy

- Paracelsus 16th century
- Leopold von Auenbrugger 1764
- Oliver: „London Medical Journal“ 1785
- Max Müller 1930: Remission of catatonia after spontaneous seizures

Müller studied medicine at the University of Bern and graduated in 1920 with a state examination and doctorate. He worked as an assistant doctor with Eugen Bleuler at Burghölzli in Zurich and as a senior physician at the Mental Hospital in Münsingen, which he headed from 1939 to 1954 as director. From 1954 to 1963 he was a full professor of psychiatry at the University of Bern and director of the Waldau.
History of Convulsive Therapy

Meduna systematically examined in the early 1930s strychnine, caffeine, absinthe, as well as later camphor and pentylenetetrazole (Cardiazol)

„Die Konvulsionstherapie der Schizophrenie“

1927 Nobel price for inoculating tertiary syphilis with malaria (v. Jauregg)

1927 Insulin-Shock therapy (Sakel)

The birth of convulsive therapy revisited: a reappraisal of László Meduna's first cohort of patients.
Baran B, Bitter I, Ungvari GS, Gazdag G.

László Meduna's pilot studies with camphor inductions of seizures: the first 11 patients.
Gazdag G, Bitter I, Ungvari GS, Baran B, Fink M.
History of Convulsive Therapy

- 1934 animal experiments (Chiauzzi)

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*Figure 1*: Illustration of pig’s anaesthesia with the electrode holder. Source: excerpt from a French brochure by Lotterschmidt & Weinberger, without any date, Siemens MedArchives, Erlangen, Germany.
Birth of electroconvulsive therapy in Rome

- 1934 animal experiments of Chiauzzi
- 1937 Bini essentially improved them
- 1938 Cerletti and Bini: first use in patients
- 1940 US immigration of Lothar Kalinowsky

Ugo Cerletti  
first ECT apparatus  
Lothar Kalinowsky

Chair of the Department of Mental and Neurological Diseases at the University of Rome La Sapienza
Third Reich 1939-1945
West Germany – East Germany 1945-1989
Re-Union 1989-2018
**Third Reich (1939-1945)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Fakes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Dialectic (healing and killing)</td>
<td>- ECT invented by NAZI regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ECT at university clinics</td>
<td>- used to torture</td>
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<td>- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz</td>
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<td>- Aktion T4</td>
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<td>- Modified ECT apparatus</td>
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<td>- industry</td>
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**Third Reich (1939-1945)**

**Facts**

- Dialectic (healing and killing) => finally, pure Nazi ideology

However, building up a cooperation in adolescent psychiatry within the „welfare education system“ will - more than anything else - help to save dispensable costs, to avoid unnecessary educational attempts at the unfit object and thus to avoid educational disappointments, to separate those in need of institutionalization, and to eradicate those in time, who are ineducable due to mental abnormalities according to §73 RJGG.
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Arcioni  
Vienna: Elkra  
Siemens: Konvulsator
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Facts
- Dialectic (healing and killing)
- ECT at psychiatric clinics
- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz
- Aktion T4
- Modified ECT apparatus
- industry
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Facts

- Dialectic (healing and killing)

- ECT at university clinics

- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz

- Aktion T4

- Modified ECT apparatus

See:

‘Electroshock Therapy’ in the Third Reich.
Rzesnitzek L, Lang S.

Rzesnitzek L, Lang S.
NTM. 2016 Sep;24(3):251-277.

ECT was used “to make emotionally disturbed people fit for work again.”
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Facts

- Dialectic (healing and killing)
- ECT at university clinics
- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz
- Aktion T4
- Modified ECT apparatus
- industry
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Facts

- Dialectic (healing and killing)

- ECT at university clinics

- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz

- Aktion T4

- Modified ECT apparatus

- industry

See:


Emil Gelny 1890-1961

Ärztl. Direktor in Gugging und Mauer-Öhling

Gelny had himself converted or modified an ELKRA II, and had used it in Gugging and Mauer-Öhling on a total of around three hundred patients.
Third Reich (1939-1945)

Facts
- Dialectic (healing and killing)
- ECT at university clinics
- ECT at Auschwitz III Monowitz
- Aktion T4
- Modified ECT apparatus
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“A machine that works”
West Germany (1945-1989)

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<td>- underuse (at least since 60’s)</td>
<td>- no longer used</td>
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West Germany (1945-1989)

- Lack of resources post war
- Overuse of unindicated ECT (also “punish” treatment)
- Isolation of scientists…
- Role of Lothar Kalinowski

'A Berlin psychiatrist with an American passport': Lothar Kalinowsky, electroconvulsive therapy and international exchange in the mid-twentieth century.
L. Rzesnitzek

Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany
1968
West Germany (1945-1989)

- biological psychiatry versus psychoanalysis and social psychiatrists (German psychiatry enquete (inquiry) commission 1970)
- 1975 “One flew over the cuckoo's nest”
- vicious circle for ECT use in Germany:
  - „… Polemics led to less experience with ECT, which led to more uncertainties in prescribing ECT, leading to even lesser experience and finally to a stop of ECT practice in many hospitals ….“

- "Cannot use the method because of the psychological and political disadvantages"
- "... with the current prejudices against ECT in the population a reintroduction in our house does not make sense, would promote a negative image and fears to contact psychiatry"
- "... So far, we respected the sensitivity of a population within a rural area with considerable pietistic cultural imprint. If necessary, the next university clinic has to carry out the ECT"
- "Reasons: fears, aversions, prejudices of the patients and the population ("Do you have electroshock?" - "No" - "Then I come to you.")"
- "I checked" Yes "- but we use hardly use it - unfortunately. Because I avoid everything that the population could scare; I very much appreciate the method but it’s not worth it. That means that individual patients have to suffer longer than would be necessary, but I am glad that we have a fearless ambiance here at our clinic”

[Electroconvulsive therapy in psychiatric clinics in Germany in 1995].
Müller U, Klimke A, Jänner M, Gaebel W.
Heterogeneity:

- some hospitals practiced ECT since the 40’s
- but some even introduced it in the early 60’s
- university clinic of Hamburg 2017!
- highly state (regional) dependent incidence

Re-Union (1989 - today)
"newspaper" study on ECT and defibrillation (1994-1995): "Der Spiegel", The "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (FAZ), the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" (NZZ) and the "Berliner Tageszeitung" (taz):

- Even in high standard newspapers the style of language becomes special when they deal with ECT.
- The articles are strongly biased and lack information.
- Referring to ECT horror pictures of past psychiatry are cited.
- The language used is biased and discriminative.
- Referring to Defibrillation technical details are described and the language is neutral.
- The social representation of ECT is completely negative.

[Electroconvulsive therapy and defibrillation in the paper. An analysis of the media]. Hoffmann-Richter U, Alder B, Finzen A.
Re-Union (1989 - today)

Facts

- still underuse, but “renaissance”
- adaption of guidelines:
  - 2003 German Medical Association
  - 2012 German Association for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics
  - 2012 S3 guideline “bipolar disorders”
  - 2015 S3 guideline “unipolar depression”
  - 2018 S3 guideline “schizophrenia” (hopefully)

Fakes

- “no longer used” – is less prevalent
Figure 2. Worldwide Treated Person Rates (TPR)—number of ECTs per 10,000 resident population per year. [Correction added after first online publication on 20 March 2012: The TPR column for UK (Department of Health 2007) has been changed to 1.84.]
"ECT OR electroconvulsive OR electroshock"

"antipsychiatric movements"

"new drugs"

“ECT OR electroconvulsive OR electroshock”
ECT history:

Facts

- Thanks for your attention!