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REVIEW

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The Most Influential Scientists in the Development of Public Health (1): Jules Rene Guerin (1801-1886)

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Jules René Guérin (Boussu, Belgium, 1801–Hyres, 1886) commenced his medical studies at Paris in 1821, obtaining his doctorate at that university in 1826 (1-3). He was early attracted to journalism, and two years later he founded the medical journal *Gazette de santé*, of which he was both editor and publisher, and for which he also wrote articles. It was renamed the *Gazette médicale de Paris* on 1830, and was directed by Guérin until 1872. He was an advocate of his profession, working, among other things, for the reintroduction of competitive examinations. Besides this he was active as a writer for several medical societies, reporter for the ministerial commission established by the physicians, and worked on new laws related to a reform regarding the teaching and practice of medicine. In this he sought to ensure the highest possible freedom of teaching. He was the originator of the medical *Feuilleton*. From 1832 he began to do more scientific work, first investigating cholera, before turning his interest to orthopaedics, which was to become his specialty and the foundation for his reputation (1, 4). After publishing some works in this field he was able to establish an orthopaedic hospital, the *Institut de la Muette* at Passy. One year later, in 1839, he was entrusted with the leadership of an orthopaedic unit at a children's hospital. From 1838 to 1843 13 works on orthopaedic problems appeared. The physiological ones were met with almost unanimous acclaim, while those on therapy and pathology were met with much animosity, especially the teno- and myotonia recommended by Guérin. Despite this he received several awards for his work. In 1837 he received the great prize of 10.000 francs for his work on difformities of the skeletal system. Guérin was in charge of the journal he had founded for more

than forty years, but contributed to others too. From 1842 he was also quite busy as a member of the Academy of Medicine (1). He was 85 years old when he went to Marseille and Toulon to help the city authorities fight an outbreak of cholera and prevent it from spreading. He was awarded three Monthyon-prizes from the Academy for his physiological work.

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