



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
MEDICINE AND THE BODY  
IN THE RENAISSANCE

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA  
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



STUDIO FIRMANO  
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

CSMBR  
ONLINE  
EVENTS



# ON THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF ICE-COLD DRINKS

3  
DECEMBER  
2024  
5.00 pm CET

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTS AND THE LOCAL STAKES OF AN EARLY MODERN MEDICAL DEBATE

ANNA SPEYART • Princeton University

The practice of chilling drinks with ice or snow in summer spread rapidly in sixteenth-century Europe, sparking a fierce debate in the medical republic of letters. From 1550 onward, physicians published dozens of treatises on the risks and benefits of chilled drinks. The treatises reveal that chilled consumption occupied an ambiguous place in the authors' temporal and geographical imagination. Contributors appealed to medical and literary authorities

from antiquity to argue both in favor and against cold drinks. Though these classical references testified to the ancient pedigree of snow-cooled drinks, early modern authors regarded chilled consumptions as a distinctly new trend. Authors also drew their arguments from comparisons with refrigeration habits in regions with climates warmer or colder than their own, including the Middle East, the Arctic, the New World, and

every corner of Europe. These comparative analyses factored the social, environmental, and infrastructural features of refrigeration at home and abroad to assess the effects of cold consumption. By analyzing the rhetorical strategies in the cold drinking debate, this lecture shows that physicians used knowledge of global environments and transhistorical time to assess the a locally practiced habit of everyday consumption.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at [csnbr.fondazionecomel.org](http://csnbr.fondazionecomel.org)