

article on history of medicine - title: German and Dutch 'Wörishofen', internationally known Kneipp cure centres

Kneipp was very famous for his natural therapy; especially for curing the TB disease. He represents the 'old, traditional healing methods' in a time when the 'Berliner Schule' modern medical science practise was gaining more influence. So Sebastian Kneipp distinguishes himself from other proponents of natural therapies in that he was not opposed to prescribing medication; although he was against vaccination. Kneipp "does not believe in vaccinations and uses numerous examples to prove their harmfulness." He also worked with doctors, partly to be recognized by the established medical profession. The Kneipp cure gradually became generally accepted. However, it is still considered quackery within allopathy.....Thus, Kneipp's approach consisted of water cures cleansing the blood. Foreign substances dissolve, the blood cleans itself of this 'miasmatic' matter and the body as a whole strengthens. In addition to hydrotherapy, the holistic Kneipp cure consisted of principles such as healthy nutrition, herbal remedies, exercise and inner balance. The word spread quickly: in 1891, more than 120 German physicians were using the Kneipp practise and 50 health institutions used the Kneipp method. Between 1894 and 1896, some 310 physicians from 20 different countries were present during Kneipp's consulting hours. The 'Kneipp Bund' (Association) was established by 200 physicians in 1897...Pope Leo XIII granted Father Kneipp the honorary title of Papal Secret Treasurer in 1894. The Pope was treated by Kneipp during his visit to Rome. The Maharadja von Baroda, Sir Sayaji Rao Gayakwadf III from India, archduke Franz Salvator, duke Paul von Mecklenburg, cardinal Gibbons, cardinal Graf Schönborn, prince Heinrich von Bourbon: they all consulted Kneipp. Kneipp's influence was great in the Dutch medical practise at the start of the twenty century.

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(4.733 words – English version)

German and Dutch 'Wörishofen', internationally known Kneipp cure centres¹

In the second half of the twentieth century antibiotics became available, enabling the cure of tuberculosis without having to spend years outdoors. To this day, TB is still one of the largest and most contagious diseases in the world.² In 1882, the tubercle bacillus was discovered by Nobel Prize winner Koch, who worked at the Charité Hospital in Berlin. 54 years later, in 1936, Flemming discovered the effect of antibiotics. After seven more years, in 1943 the first antibiotics became available as

¹ the auteur thanks prof. dr. M.J. van Lieburg, Emeritus Professor in Medical History at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands and director of 'Trefpunt Medische Geschiedenis Nederland' (Society of Medical History in the Netherlands) and M. Scharpf, volunteer in the Kneipp Museum and historian of Bad Wörishofen, Germany.

² See WHO press item Tuesday, 29 October 2024: "Tuberculosis resurges as top infectious disease killer". In 2023 about 8.2 million people were diagnosed with TB, an increase of 700.000 since 2022. TB was the leading cause of death by infectious disease in 2023: about 1.25 million people died of TB-related illnesses. Multidrug-resistant TB is problematic, although 68% of treatments were successful. Only US\$ 5.7 billion of the US\$ 22 billion annual funding target was available in 2023. United Nations General Assembly set targets to tackle TB by 2027 but global funding for TB prevention and care decreased in 2023 and remained far below target. On the bright side, there are six vaccine candidates in late-stage clinical studies. <https://hq.who.departementofcommunications.cmail20.com/t/d-e-silly-iltldisq-i>
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis>
<https://www.euronews.com/health/2024/10/29/tb-is-once-again-the-worlds-deadliest-infectious-disease-analysis-finds>
Humphreys, M.; "Tuberculosis: the 'consumption' and civilization"; chapter 21 – p. 136 – 141 in Kiple, K.F.; "Plague, pox and pestilence; disease in history"; Phoenix Illustrated, 1997; ISBN 0-75380-712-2.

medicines. Mass production started in the 1950s. Up till that time, all kinds of healing methods were used that nowadays might be labelled as 'quackery'.³

Natural Cure Movement

As a natural cure movement, the Kneipp cure was ideologically based on Naturalism. In the 19th century, the German natural cure movement emerged, which merged with the German 'Lebens Reform Bewegung' in the 20th century. 'Holism' and 'vitalism' stood as common factors central. Campaigns were conducted for moderation and against tobacco use and against vaccination. Industrialization and urbanization were criticized. The 'Natural Cure Movement' was based on the healing power of sunlight, air and water. Hydrotherapy was initially limited to (amateur) healers such as Johann Siegmund Hahn and Vincenz Priessnitz. Sebastian Kneipp distinguishes himself from other proponents of natural therapies in that he was not opposed to prescribing medication; although he was against vaccination. Kneipp "does not believe in vaccinations and uses numerous examples to prove their harmfulness."⁴ He also worked with doctors, partly to be recognized by the established medical profession. The Kneipp cure gradually became generally accepted. However, it is still considered quackery within allopathy.⁵

Pastor Sebastiaan Kneipp at Wörishofen, Germany

Naturopathy assumes that sick people often recover of themselves and that this 'self-healing capacity' can be promoted by the systematic use of 'natural stimuli', such as sun, heat, water and nutrition. Naturopaths use all kinds of techniques, such as heat and cold treatments, sauna, water and bath therapies. Vincent Priessnitz is considered the founder of hydrotherapy. In the early 1800s he gained fame by healing many patients with cold water compresses in combination with breathing exercises and diet. Priessnitz supplemented his therapy with remedies such as nourishing food, fresh air, exercise, rest, and water. Other big names in the field of hydrotherapy are Kellogg and Kneipp.⁶



Pastor Sebastian Kneipp



Pastor Kneipp and his patients

The life story of pastor Sebastian Kneipp (1821 - 1897) is closely linked to his ideas about health. After contracting tuberculosis, he looked for ways to treat the disease. He managed to heal himself by daily taking a cold-water bath in the Danube. Afterwards, he continued to investigate the healing effects of water.⁷ As a priest student at the Georgianum in Munich in 1850, he secretly treated fellow students

³ <https://www.kwakzalverij.nl/encyclopedie/n/encyclopedie-natuurgeneeskunde>

Hulspas, M.; Nienhuys, J.W.: "Tussen Waarheid en Waanzin: een encyclopedie der pseudo-wetenschappen"; De Geus, 2002.

⁴ Speyer, J.; "Der berühmte Pfarrer Kneipp aus Wörishofen"; 1893, p. 22

- Kneipp, S.; „Vorträge“; Band 3; 1890-1891 Lecture in which he speaks out against vaccinations.
- Auer, L.; „Kneipp-Blättern“; 1891; 9 places negative reports on the consequences of vaccinations.
- „Kneipp-Blättern“; 1892; 32 entries, all of which express negative views on vaccinations..

⁵ Ko, Youkyung; "Sebastian Kneipp and the Natural Cure Movement of Germany: Between Naturalism and Modern Medicine"; doi: 10.13081/kjnh.2016.25.557; 2016 Dec;25(3):557-590.

⁶ <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Priessnitzmonument> // https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Harvey_Kellogg
<https://www.kwakzalverij.nl/encyclopedie/k/encyclopedie-kellogg-john-harvey-1852-1943>

⁷ Verdoorn, J.A.; "Volksgezondheid en sociale ontwikkeling, beschouwingen over het gezondheidswezen in Amsterdam in de 19de eeuw"; Aula-boeken, Utrecht; 1965, p. 51 -53.

who were suffering from tuberculosis. This didn't go unnoticed: in February 1853, the first complaint of quackery was made because he had treated a maid suffering from cholera with hot compresses. In 1854, a pharmacist from Babenhausen in Swabia sued Kneipp for "interfering with and damaging his trade". Kneipp explained to the court that he only assisted people who hadn't found any help after years of treatment from doctors and pharmacists, or who simply did not have the money to pay for consulting physicians. In 1852, Kneipp was ordained as a priest. In 1854, Kneipp was able to cure forty-two people suffering from cholera in the village Boos, where he also served as a chaplain. He was therefore called the "cholera chaplain". He was appointed in 1855 at the Dominican sister convent in Wörishofen, a village in southern Germany. He contributed to the economic prosperity of the convent as well as the local population by writing books about breeding rabbits and keeping honeybees. In 1881, he was also appointed parish pastor in Wörishofen. Besides his priestly duties, he started practicing bath therapy in 1855. In the following 40 years he founded 'Kuranstalten' (Spas) such as the Sabastianeum, the Kneippsche Kinderheilstätte and the Kneippianum. Between 1889 and 1897, no fewer than 3,000 guest beds became available in Wörishofen. Kneipp's famous book "Meine Wasserkur" appeared in 1886, with many print runs and translations in the following years.⁸ His second book "So Sollt Ihr Leben!" ("This Is How You Should Live") followed in 1889. His other publications are "Kinderpflege" (Children's Care, 1891), "Ratgeber" (Adviser, 1891), "Mein Testament" (1894) and "Codizill" (1896).



Pastor Kneipp with skullcap, leaning on the left side of the bridge railing, before 'Kneipp's Wasserkuranstalt'

Kneipp's fame grew in Europe and all other continents. In 1890 alone, about 30.000 patients consulted the pastor and 6.000 patients stayed for a cure. The results of his treatments were impressive. According to a Dutch newspaper in 1891, about 20 % of all patients recovered completely, 40 % regained their health after returning home and 40% experienced reduced ailments. Since most patients came to Wörishofen without any recovery after unseal medical treatments, these results are surprisingly high.⁹

Kneipp cures.

⁸ Kneipp, Sebastian; "Meine Wasserkur / So sollt Ihr Leben", 499 Seiten, broschiertes Buch, Doppelband; 49th impression in 1894, English translation In 1891: <https://archive.org/details/mywatercureastes00kneiuoft/page/n7/mode/2up?view=theate>.

⁹ Tilburgsche Courant in the Netherlands //27-08-1891; Tilburg is a town in the Southern part of the Netherlands. Articles appeared in other Dutch newspapers with likewise wording.

https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=kneipp&facets%5Btype%5D%5B%5D=artikel&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Landelijk&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Nederlands-Indi%C3%AB+%7C+Indonesi%C3%AB&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Regionaal%7Clokaal&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=0%7C19e_eeuw%7C&page=1&maxperpage=50&sortfield=date&cql%5B%5D=%28date+_gte_+%2201-01-1880%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28date+_lte_+%2201-01-1940%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28DelpherPublicationDate+_lte_+%2231-12-2013%22%29&coll=ddd&redirect=true&identifier=ddd:010188472:mpeg21:a0004&resultsidentifier=ddd:010188472:mpeg21:a0004&rowid=29

Hippocrates and Galenus already applied water treatments systematically. According to these doctors, cold water had a 'tonifying effect and strengthened the natural mental power of the organism'. Kneipp combined this classical approach with physical exercise, medicinal herbs, nutritional advice and strict rules of life to restore inner balance. His hydrotherapy aimed to strengthen the constitution and eliminate toxins. In his approach, the changes in blood circulation, the number of erythrocytes and the temperature after the treatments stood central. The effectiveness of the water cure depended on the temperature, the hydrostatic pressure and the frictional resistance of water, but also on mechanical and chemical factors. The therapy consisted of water jet treatments, all kinds of baths, rubbing treatments, washings, packs, wraps, compresses and the use of hay bags and peloids (mud, clay or loam). Kneipp's method fits within the humoral pathology, in which breathing, metabolism and sleep are also central. Indications included tuberculosis, rheumatic diseases, circulatory disorders, hypertension, gynecological and psychosomatic complaints. Due to the lack of large-scale and randomized research into the results of various hydrotherapeutic methods, these therapies are classified as alternative treatments.¹⁰

¹⁰ Dijk, van, P.; *"Geneeswijzen in Nederland en Vlaanderen, compendium van niet-universitaire geneeswijzen"*; Ankh-Hermes uitgeverij, Deventer, 1984; p. 165-182.



Wörishofen: lodging, the town, patients' waiting room, pastor Kneipp, diagnostics, lecture by Kneipp and water therapy treatment

Kneipp's approach stemmed from the theory that all diseases originate in the circulatory system. This was consistent with the humoral theory. Kneipp claimed that breathing 'miasmatic' (unhealthy) or excessively hot air can lead to blood imbalances, which in turn may lead to circulatory disorders and disease. Kneipp stated: "In cases of diseases susceptible to cure, the blood is to blame. The circulation may be in disorder, or the juices may be spoiled". In both cases he considered water to be a remedy par excellence.¹¹ Thus, Kneipp's approach consisted of water cures cleansing the blood. Foreign substances dissolve, the blood cleans itself of this 'miasmatic' matter and the body as a whole strengthens. In addition to hydrotherapy, the holistic Kneipp cure consisted of principles such as healthy nutrition, herbal remedies, exercise and inner balance.¹²

¹¹ See note nr. 8.

¹² [Meine Wasserkur / So sollt Ihr leben | Leben und Wirken | Sebastian Kneipp | Bücher | Online-Shop Kneipp-Verlag \(kneippverlag.de\)](#):

"The water cure was already known as a healing method to the Greeks and Romans, but was forgotten over the centuries. Sebastian Kneipp,

The word spread quickly: in 1891, more than 120 German physicians were using the Kneipp practise and 50 health institutions used the Kneipp method. Between 1894 and 1896, some 310 physicians from 20 different countries were present during Kneipp's consulting hours.¹³ The 'Kneipp Bund' (Association) was established by 200 physicians in 1897.¹⁴



The founders of the 'Kneipp Bund' in 1897. Notice the barefooted men on the left.

Kneipp's most trusted physician was Alfred Baumgarten, MD, who collaborated for many years. He wrote a large and detailed biography on Sebastian Kneipp in 1898.¹⁵ In France there was a periodical 'Le Kneippiste' (The Kneippian) by the editor madam Vera Freifrau von Vogelsang-Waibel. Kneipp also had an impressive international clientele. His great supporter and personal friend was Archduke Joseph of Austria, who stayed in Wörishofen several times, together with his son Joseph Augustin.



Father Kneipp in the middle, at the right Archduke Joseph of Austria, at left duke Joseph Augustin

the famous "water doctor", was the one who rediscovered the therapeutic value of this treatment. He further developed the cold water application, introduced the warm water methods and recognized the value of the alternating stimulus. But it is not only the water cure that brings help and healing, it is also the natural way of life. Kneipp's teachings on exercise, education and nutrition have lost none of their importance even today.

¹³ Kneipp Museum at Wörishofen (Germany)

¹⁴ De Tijd : godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad //21-07-1891

https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=kneipp&facets%5Btype%5D%5B%5D=artikel&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Landelijk&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Nederlands-Indi%C3%AB+%7C+Indonesi%C3%AB&facets%5Bspatial%5D%5B%5D=Regionaal%7Clokaal&facets%5Bperiode%5D%5B%5D=0%7C19e_eeuw%7C&page=1&maxperpage=50&sortfield=date&cql%5B%5D=%28date+lte+%2201-01-1880%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28date+lte+%2201-01-1940%22%29&cql%5B%5D=%28DelpherPublicationDate+lte+%2231-12-2013%22%29&coll=ddd&redirect=true&identifier=ddd:010384849:mpeg21:a0073&resultsidentifier=ddd:010384849:mpeg21:a0073&rowid=26

¹⁵ Baumgarten, A.; "Sebastian Kneipp, Biografische Studie"; Berlin, Verlag von Julius Becker, 1898; 263 pages.

Pope Leo XIII granted Father Kneipp the honorary title of Papal Secret Treasurer in 1894. The Pope was treated by Kneipp during his visit to Rome. The Maharadja von Baroda, Sir Sayaji Rao Gayakwadf III from India, archduke Franz Salavator, duke Paul von Mecklenburg, cardinal Gibbons, cardinal Graf Schönborn, prince Heinrich von Bourbon: they all consulted Kneipp.

In some respects Kneipp's views differ fundamentally from those of other proponents of natural therapies. For example, the highly documented diagnostics used by Kneipp and several of his physicians are striking.¹⁶ Apparently, Kneipp tried to gain recognition by the established medical field by working with physicians who supported his treatment. Therefore, the Kneipp cure became accepted to a certain degree in at least parts of the medical world, despite the controversy that already existed between modern medicine and the 'quackery' of the Natural Cure Movement.¹⁷ To the merit of Kneipp, the general definition of health expanded to include a more holistic view that also included mental, social and spiritual aspects.

Towards the end of Kneipp's life and after his death in 1897, several organizations were founded to continue teaching his methods. The 'Kneipp-Bund' still exists till today. In 1923, the organization released one of the first educational patient-centred (silent) movies, 'Die Kneippkur'.¹⁸ Kneipp Societies emerged in the USA, now known as the 'Naturopathic Society of America'. Currently, around 600 organizations are part of the 'Kneipp Worldwide' network and include the 'International Society of Kneipp Physicians' with about 1,000 members. Since Kneipp's death, his treatments have become part of mainstream medicine in Germany. On December 4, 2012, the Kneipp cure was declared an intangible national cultural heritage.¹⁹ Pastor Sebastian Kneipp is the namesake of current drugstore products with the brand name 'Kneipp'. His Kneippbrød, a recipe for whole wheat bread, is the preferred bread in Norway.²⁰

Kneipp treatments in the Netherlands: Heerlen

Kneipp institutions in the Netherlands were established in Heerlen, Ginneken, Haarlem, Bergen-op-Zoom, Hilversum, Apeldoorn, Rotterdam and Zandvoort between 1892 and 1901.²¹ One of Kneipp's best-known followers was Brother Aloysius of the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Joseph at Heerlen. In 1891-1892 and in 1893-1894 Brother Aloysius visited Wörishofen. At first, Kneipp didn't pay him any attention at all.



Brother Aloysius of the Dutch 'Congregation of the Brothers of St. Joseph' (1854 – 1942).

¹⁶ Kneipp's Kinder asylum Wörishofen: 11 diagnostics verbatim of treatments of children shown in the Kneipp Museum in Wörishofen. Kneipp was assisted by several physicians like: A. Baumgarten, Dr. Med. Sanitätsrat (1862 – 1924); Bonifaz Reik (1862 -1932) Kneipp's Mitarbeiter und Vertrauter; Franz Kleinschrod, Ärztlicher Mitarbeiter, Wissenschaftlichen Begründung der Kneipp'schen Lehre; Med. Sanitätsrat (1860 – 1934); Kneipp-Arzt, Adolf Scholz, Dr. Med. Sanitätsrat (1870 – 1952); Albert Schalle, Dr. Med. Sanitätsrat (1877 – 1952), Kneipp-Ärzten; Fotos in Kneipp Museum in Wörishofen / Germany.

¹⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28529304>

¹⁸ „Die Kneippkur“, ein Stummfilm aus Bad Wörishofen(1923); Kneipp-Verlag GMBH, Bad Wörishofen; neue Herausgabe 2022.

¹⁹ <https://www.foerderkreis-kneippmuseum.de/aktuelles>

²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sebastian_Kneipp#Early

²¹ Kneipp institutions in the Netherlands 1892 -1901 – see: Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Geneeskunde 1892 – 1901.

However, Brother Aloysius was a great expert on herbal medicine. In due time, Kneipp recognized his capabilities and in 1892, he even suggested that Brother Aloysius might become his successor.²² Aloysius rejected this proposition and opened a men's home for his Kneipp institution 'Sint Josef Bad' in Heerlen. In 1893, he gave a lecture at a meeting in Wörishofen, also attended by archduke Joseph of Austria and prince Arenberg. After this lecture, Kneipp remarked: "Sie machen bald so viel mit Ihre Kräutern, wie ich mit meinem Wasser".²³ In 1897, Brother Aloysius opened the 'Sanatorium Sint Jozef-Heilbron' for the wealthier male spa guests. Afterwards a boarding house 'Maria Bad' was opened for female guests. Physicians were always associated with these institutions.²⁴ Aloysius' book "Comfort of the Sick" was published in 1901 and later translated into German and French. In his unpublished account-book he described 330 different diseases and 34 medicinal plants. In 1910, his patient book contained about 2,400 names from home and abroad.²⁵ The 'Aloysius herbal pharmacy' in Heerlen remained in operation until 1957. The Heerlen Kneipp sanatoriums formed the basis for the later St. Joseph hospital, which is now called Zuyderland hospital.

'Small Wörishofen' at Ginneken (presently Breda)

In 1892, doctor Siegbert C.M. Soer (1861 – 1922) purchased a plot of building land next to his house 'Mariëndal' in Ginneken (now Breda). Soer had obtained his PhD in 1887 from the University of Utrecht on the topic "On Beer and Artificial Digestion".²⁶ Before settling in Ginneken, he worked as a general physician in Tilburg.



Mariëndal and the 'Duivelsbrug' (Devil's Bridge) in 1901 in Ginneken (near Breda in the Netherlands)

Dr. Soer had been visiting Wörishofen in Germany several times to learn the Kneipp method. He therefore called himself 'the first Kneipp doctor in the Netherlands'.²⁷ Soer started his institution for physical therapy in 1893. The Ginneken institution was called 'Klein (small) Wörishofen', consisting of a simple wooden building with a large open veranda, erected on his newly acquired plot. Behind the veranda was a guardroom with bathing departments on either side, one for men and one for women.

²² Letter by Brother Aloysius d.d. 1 Februar 1892; personal file of *Broeder Aloysius (inventaris nr. 1599 - AR-BO13-11.1.2 / 133-137)*; Archive 'Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven'; Kloosterlaan 24, 5435 XD Sint Agatha, the Netherlands studiezaak@erfgoedkloosterleven.nl / www.erfgoedkloosterleven.nl

²³ *Broeder Aloysius & Mgr. Savelberg; Heerlen Vertelt, 8 april 2014, Ingezonden verhaal. eerder - 1900, Heerlen-Stad: Heerlen Centrum, Ingezonden verhalen, Kerk, geloof en mythen.*

²⁴ Physicians like Chr. P. van Dillen, J.H. van der Wijst en F.B.M.B. Schiphors. In: Koehler, P. and Franke, C.; "Zorg voor zenuwziek(t)en, 75 Jaar neurologische zorg in Heerlen e.o."; uitgave afd. Neurologie Zuyderland MC; 2016; p. 40-42; ISBN 97890-825408-0-2

²⁵ Nieuwenhuis, D.; brief d.d. 19 okt. 1993; Erfgoed Centrum Nederlands Kloosterleven/ St Agatha /AR-B013-11.1.2 Archief inventaris Broeders van de H. Joseph (Broeders van Heerlen) én https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Joseph_Savelberg

²⁶ https://maastrichtuniversity.on.worldcat.org/search/detail/865503411?queryString=S.%20Soer%20&clusterResults=true&stickyFacetsChecked=true&group//VariantRecords=false&changedFacet=scope&subformat=Artchap%3A%3Aartchap_digital&subformat=Book%3A%3Abook_thisis&year=1880..1930

²⁷ Otten, G.; "het Villalandschap rond het Markdal te Ginneken, 1840 -1940"; *Jaarboek de Oranjeboom* 54 (2001); p. 285-288. S.C.M. Soer, *Een jaar badarts van Klein Wörishofen (Gorinchem, 1894).*

Cold water was pumped to tanks on top of the roof. Guests had a choice of hot or cold showers or bathtubs. In addition to his water cure, he also recommended a simple lifestyle in which air, sunlight and herbs were used.

Soer applied various forms of Kneipp hydrotherapy, such as rubbing treatments, washings, packs, wraps, compresses and water jet treatments. These therapies were intended for “those suffering from tense nerves or rheumatic disorders”. The costs of his treatments amounted between five and six guilders per week. In the first year, his institution was already attracted by several hundred visitors. During their treatment period, the patients stayed in local hotels.



Medical bath facility, Dr. Soer, Ginneken (near Breda in the Netherlands)

At the time, expectations regarding the spa treatment were high. “There is no place in our country that is as suitable for a health resort as Ginneken. The simple, rural environment, the many beautiful hotels, the healthy pine forests, the Mark (river) with its clear flowing water, the friendly people, everything together makes the stay here so pleasant for the sick and recovering, and has such a calming effect on nervous sufferers especially, that one should first become acquainted with Ginneken as a health resort before one thinks of looking abroad for what is available”, according to an somewhat over-enthusiastic ‘Nieuwe Bredasche Courant’.²⁸ Soer probably saw his modest wooden spa grow into a real riverside resort. The board of the Bad Wörishofen Foundation even proposed to have a new road constructed to improve the pedestrian connection from Breda with the spa institute but the initiative subsequently fizzled out.²⁹

In the following years the Ginneken resort became so famous that it exceeded the locally available hotel capacity. Dr. Soer treated his poor and rich patients indiscriminately, financially weak patients usually receiving free treatments. Even a ‘Kneipp’s Toko’ (shop) opened nearby, where all kinds of Kneipp articles such as clothing and healthy foods were sold.

²⁸ ‘Kneipp-gasten’, in: *Nieuwe Bredasche Courant*, 9 maart 1894.

²⁹ Otten, G.; “Het Villalandschap rond het Markdal te Ginneken, 1840 -1940”; *Jaarboek de Oranjeboom* 54 (2001); p. 285-288.



postcard written by a patient; Wörishofen; Mariendal and 'Kneip's Toko'(shop)

In 1919, Soer transferred his practice to dr. Jasper Mom, who subsequently incorporated his practice under the name 'Medical bathing facility Bad Wörishofen, Duivelsbrug at Ginneken'.³⁰ The nearby hotel 'Duivelsbrug' ('Devils Bridge') was expanded to forty rooms.³¹ The rooms in hotel 'Duivelsbrug' were furnished in a very modern way and equipped with hot and cold running water, central heating, elevators and even garages. Dr. Mom also had a new bathhouse built next to the hotel. In 1921 his second spa resort was ceremonially opened.



Hotel 'Devils Bridge', Duivelsbruglaan at Ginneken (Breda)³²

³⁰ "Mariëndal", een fraaie Ginneken villa viel ten prooi aan een eeuw Ginneken geschiedenis. Zie: http://www.paulusvandaesdonck.nl/WimSiegmond/artikel_219.html

³¹ Estimation of possible number of patients between 1921 - 1944: 23 years for Wörishofen-Breda with 40 rooms by 75% occupation could come by an average treatment time of one week with 2 people in one room: 71.800 patients. Thus about 3.120 patients per annum on average. Possibly there were guests returning annually. No patient data have been preserved for the Soer period (1893 - 1921) as a result of the bombing in 1944. Since patient data are not available, figures about the patient flow are an author's guess.

³² <https://www.brabantserfgoed.nl/collectie/object/stadsarchief-breda/90c9601f1b3845f609698b2a8b8c18a318e9ca3d>



dr. J.C. Mom (1882 -date of his dead is unknown)

Dr. Mom described his methods in “Physical Therapy, Natural Healing Method”, published in 1926. Besides hot and cold water treatments he discussed thermo-, hydro-, light-, air- and movement therapies as well as massages. He also applied all kinds of electrical therapies, such as Faradization³³, Galvanization³⁴ and Franklinization³⁵. In addition to all this, hydro-electric³⁶, four-cell, carbohydrate light, carbon dioxide³⁷ and steam baths were also possible, and other therapies such as high frequency, diathermy, light treatment with Sollux³⁸, sunbed and rest cures. 'Wörishofen' was located next to the local 'Mastbos' woods, so woodcutting was practiced as occupational therapy. On the nearby river Mark guests rowed their boats. The treatments were suitable in cases of “reconvalescence, rheumatism, physical weakness, metabolic diseases, nervous and respiratory disorders”. In the twenties and thirties of the last century, the spa resort enjoyed international fame.³⁹ From 1921 to 1940, the spa was open year round. The Dutch Tourist Information praised the spa resort for “its location on sandy soil, in air that has not yet been polluted by factories, and in the middle of forests”.

Notwithstanding all favourable accounts on patients' recoveries, there was a continuous disagreement about Kneipp's theory and method in the Dutch medical world. For example, in 1906, Prof. H. Treub from Leiden University called Dr. Snoer a 'quack' who wrote nothing but “a mixture of dangerous medical nonsense” and suffered from pitiful overestimation.⁴⁰ Snoer considered this accusation to be unjustified and responded with his own pamphlet, in which he explained Kneipp's merits. He stated that Kneipp's therapy was often used by physicians. In his opinion, many good results were achieved by treating patients after operations, but also for rheumatism and lung diseases.⁴¹ Unfortunately, the lack of records prohibits an evaluation of his treatments. However, the assumption is justified that attention, rest and a healthy diet might have contributed to his patients' recovery.

³³ using electrization or faradization to treat insomnia; Watson, N.F.; McCall, C.; Doherty, M.; “Faradization for insomnia: a sleep neurology history”; *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*; 2021-02-01; 17(2):249-254; doi: 10.5664/jcsm.8958.

³⁴ “Galvanism” stands for a direct current of electricity produced by chemical action. Luigi Galvani (1737–1798) was an Italian physician, physicist, biologist and philosopher, who studied animal electricity. In 1780 he discovered that the muscles of dead frogs' legs twitched when struck by an electrical spark. This was an early study of bioelectricity.

• Brunia, K.; “Het brein van farao tot fMRI, een fenomenale ontdekkingsreis”; Eburon, Delft, 2015; ISBN 9789463010306; p. 154 – 157.

³⁵ The process of charging up a patient with static electricity was called ‘Franklinization’ after Benjamin Franklin briefly experimented in this field. He attempted to treat a number of paralytics, first with electric shocks, and then with static charging, but without much success. He described these procedures in a letter of 1757.

³⁶ Hydroelectric cell in which electric charges are produced by redox reaction. As electrodes, zinc & silver are used, with zinc serving as an anode & silver acting as a cathode. It provides several benefits to humans.

³⁷ Regulation of respiration: carbon dioxide is one of the mediators of local autoregulation of blood supply. If its concentration is high, the capillaries expand to allow a greater blood flow to that tissue.

³⁸ The sollux lamp is a device mainly used in physiotherapy: the light penetrates deep into the skin, dilating blood vessels, faster flowing blood promoting nutrient exchange or detox. The body relaxes. The light also has analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties and stimulates the thermal receptors of the skin.

³⁹ Lieburg, van, M.J.; “Negentig jaar OZ zorgverzekeringen; een rondgang door de medische geschiedenis van de regio West-Brabant, Zeeuws-Vlaanderen en de Zuid-Hollandse eilanden” Erasmus Publishing, Rotterdam; p. 27; ISBN 90-5235-183-X

⁴⁰ <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn4/treub>

⁴¹ Vegchel, van, G.; “Medici contra kwakzalvers; de strijd tegen niet-orthodoxe geneeswijzen in Nederland in de 19^{de} en 20^{ste} eeuw”; Het Spinhuis; 1991; ISBN 90-73052-14-9; p. 105 en 450-41.

VLOEIBLAD



KUUROORD „BAD WÖRISHOFEN“ GINNEKEN

INRICHTING VOOR PHYSISCHE THERAPIE
GENEESKUNDIGE BADINRICHTING EN
HERSTELLINGSOORD

Het geheele jaar geopend,
beschikkend over hooglezen, sollux, infra-rood-be-
stralingen, koolzuurbaden, warm en koudwaterbehan-
deling, diathermie, hautefrequency, korte golf, hydro-
radium-behandeling, radium-drinkkuren en baden;

Behandeling van rheuma, stofwisselings- en zenuwstoornissen, algemeene zwakte, reconvalescentie na ernstige ziekte of verblijf in de tropen, vaat- bloedsdruk- en circulatiestoornissen.

Ook zij, die een rustig aangenaam verblijf wenschen, zonder speciale behandeling te behoeven, kunnen in Bad Wörishofen hun intrek nemen. Voor de opnamen van zwaar-zieken is de inrichting niet bestemd, terwijl ook storende patienten en lijders aan tuberculose niet worden opgenomen.

De Tarieven zijn :

1e klas vanaf f 6.50.
2e klas vanaf f 5.50.

PROSPECTUS OP AANVRAAG. TELEF. BREDA 2512
GENEESHEER-DIRECTEUR Dr. J. C. MOM
2e GENEESHEER W. F. VAN MEERENDONK, ARTS
BEDRIJFS-DIRECTEUR M. C. E. OUWEHAND

Different therapies for the treatment of rheumatism, metabolic and nervous disorders, general weakness, convalescence after serious illness, stay in the tropics, vascular, blood pressure or circulatory disorders, but seriously ill, disruptive and TB patients are not admitted.

In May 1940, peace at the health resort was cruelly disrupted by the evacuation of all inhabitants of Breda. The doctors, staff and all the guests had to leave in a hurry. During fights between the French and the German armies, an armoured car hit a landmine just in front of the spa centre. The explosion completely demolished the building and a fire in one of the consultation rooms devoured the entire archive. The restoration of the spa was completed in October 1940 and it reopened to patients under the name 'Bad Ginneken'. A modern high-pressure mercury lamp was put into use for radiation treatments. Notwithstanding the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, between October 1940 and October 1944 the spa resort remained a popular location. In 1943, the fiftieth anniversary was celebrated extensively. The resort closed permanently after Friday, October 13, 1944, when Allied airmen mistakenly bombed the institution. Within a few minutes, the beautiful and peaceful 'Bad Ginneken' again turned into a ruin. The bombing was a tragic mistake: the spa was confused with the adjacent villa, which at that time was used as headquarters of the German 67th Army Corps. A meeting of high German officers was said to take place in this villa on that day. A major communication breakdown between the Allies or a mistake by the Dutch resistance caused the wrong target to be chosen. After the war, the spa resort wasn't rebuilt. Dr. Mom decided to continue his work at the Physiotherapeutic Institute in Rotterdam. A memorial plaque about the Kneipp resort of yesteryear was placed nearby the former spa on October 8, 2014.

Kneipp hydrotherapy and Evidence Based Medicine

For Kneipp hydrotherapy, the implementation of Evidence Based Medicine in internal medicine is a major challenge. In the '80s and '90s of the last century, Kneipp therapy did gain recognition in some preclinical, physiological and clinical studies, but there is hardly any reliable data for scientific evidence.⁴² An inventory of studies between 2000 and 2019 on the Kneipp method leads to the following conclusions. This last study is based on 25 sources, of which 14 were controlled studies. According to EPHPP-QAT⁴³, 3 studies were rated as 'strong', 13 as 'moderate' and 9 as 'weak'. 64% of the controlled studies reported significant improvements after Kneipp treatments in patients suffering from chronic venous insufficiency, hypertension, mild heart failure, menopausal complaints and sleep disorders. Their immune parameters also improved. However, no differences were found with regard to depressive and anxiety complaints in breast cancer patients, neither in climacteric

⁴² Ehnert; L.; Geiser, C.; "What is confirmed in Kneipp therapy? The perspective of internal medicine"; Inn Med (Heidelberg); DOI: 10.1007/s00108-022-01423-8; Epub 2022 Nov 9.

⁴³ Quality Assessment Tool for Quantitative Studies is a tool developed in Canada by the EPHPP with the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). Quality Assessment Tool for Quantitative Studies.

complaints, the quality of life in post-polio syndrome, polyneuropathic complaints and colds in children. Eleven uncontrolled studies reported improvements in allergic symptoms, dyspepsia, quality of life, heart rate variability, infections, hypertension, well-being, pain and polyneuropathic complaints. All this research yields small and still questionable results. Future studies will have to meet stricter methodological criteria, such as control groups, randomization, adequate patient numbers and blinding.⁴⁴ A most recent Random Controlled Trials (RCT) also showed some positive effects. However, these treatment effects are difficult to establish due to the high risk of bias and lack of heterogeneity. More thorough RCTs remain necessary to demonstrate any favourable results.⁴⁵

Dongen, the Netherlands, 2025-01-19.

⁴⁴ Stier-Jarmer, M.; Throner, V.; Kirschneck, M.; Frisch, D.; Schuh, A.; „Effekte der Kneipp-Therapie: Ein systematischer Review der aktuellen wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse (2000-2019)“; PubMed doi: 10.1159/000510452. Epub 2020 Oct 13; 2021;28(2):146-159

⁴⁵ Ortiz, M.; Koch, A.K.; Cramer, H.; Linde, K.; Rotter, G.; Teut, M.; Brinkhaus, M.; Haller, M.; „Clinical effects of Kneipp hydrotherapy: a systematic review of randomised controlled trials“; BMJ Open; 2023 Jul 9;13(7):e070951. doi: 10.1136 / bmjopen-2022-070951.