

Jules Émile Pean Biography

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Biography

Considered one of the founders of modern gynecology, Pean was so famous in his homeland for his advances in gynecological surgery and other innovations that Henri Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) painted the surgeon's portrait.

Pean was born in Chateaudun, France and received his education from the College de Chartres. He began studying medicine at age 19 at the University of Paris, where he insisted on using aseptic surgical techniques throughout the 1850s despite his colleagues' general lack of concern about this crucial factor. Pean wrote the first of his many books, *The Splenectomy*, in 1860. He was instrumental in developing the arterial clamp in 1862, and by 1868, the gifted young man was chief surgeon of all hospitals in Paris.

In 1874, Pean was appointed chief of services at St. Louis Hospital. He wrote *The Elements of Pathological Surgery* the following year, *Lessons in Clinical Surgery* in 1876, and in 1877 a book on the use of hemostatic forceps, which he had invented in 1868.

In the realm of gynecology, which was in its infancy in the mid-1800s, Pean was a force of innovation and integrity. He invented effective ways to remove the ovaries and performed a vaginal hysterectomy for carcinoma in 1890. In addition, he devised a method for gastrectomy and is believed to have performed the first surgery to correct diverticula of the bladder in 1895. Late in the century, Pean also attempted the first known total joint arthroplasty, although unsuccessfully. He died in 1898.