First Aid: History And Role Of Technologies

First aid comprises of a series of drills and skills to help sick or injured people until full medical treatment is available; the term can be dated back to 1878 but the first recorded example of people who trained to administer first aid can be seen 1099, when the order of St John (a group of knights) trained to treat battlefield injuries during the crusades. The lack of medical attention needed for injured men on the battlefield- resulting in the loss of life-is what lead to medical training in splinting and bandaging for battlefield wounds.

In 1792, Dominique Jean Larrey formed the first official army medical corps. Soldiers were taught and equipped for working away from the available field hospitals, administering first aid or carrying casualties back.

A short time after in 1859, an army surgeon first came up with the idea of training civilians in what was termed “pre-medical treatment”. This then led to drastic changes during the late 1800s with the formations of what we now know as the modern-day Red Cross (1870) and St John Ambulance (1877).

In January 1878 first aid courses were offered at a church in Woolwich; Dr James Cantile later published notes about how to provide first aid to the injured. Then, it wasn’t long before St John Ambulance ran other public courses throughout Britain.

Britain’s first official ambulance crews were next trained for use in the mines and on the railways, with attendants being taught the most basic first aid; later, in 1897 the Metropolitan Asylums Board created London’s first full-time ambulance service.

Railroad workers and miners were frequently injured, but medical help was too far away to do any good. So, a man called Robert Wood Johnson (a notorious surgeon) decided to collaborate with Johnson & Johnson (two men who made products like sterile gauze, bandages and dressings) to create a box of products that could be kept with the workers so if they were injured, they could be treated and stabilised till they could reach medical assistance. after, in 1891 first aid kits were manufactured and marketed under the Red Cross trademark.

St John Ambulance and The Red Cross set the basis of modern-day first aid training, although first aid hasn’t quite evolved since the early 1900’s some practices in retrospect had low temporal validity for example: around 1908, first aid courses where divided into 5 lectures with the content of the 5th lecture depending on your gender. For males the last class dealt with how to use stretchers, carrying and the transportation of patients, whereas the last female lecture dealt with preparing for the arrival of casualties how to remove a casualties clothing and preparations for surgeons.

Pre-hospital treatment has recently advanced due to the latest medical advancements such as AED’s and high-tech ambulances, but the basic aim of first aid today hasn’t changed, just the equipment being used has evolved to work more efficiently, for example:

Joe Landolina has developed an adhesive gel that supports the blood’s natural clotting process

It could soon be the go-to method for stopping major external bleeding in just minutes. Having these gels in first aid kits could assist people who aren't qualified in first aid or are less skilled help the casualty.

Technology also plays a major role in modern society. Due to the increases in people owning devices like Apple Watch and Iphone’s, first aid and healthcare will hopefully be transformed by monitoring and advising users in a medical emergency. In a few generations, these devices could also include accurate heart rate monitors and temperature sensors making first aid easier to carry out. Medical IDs are also displayed on devices which make any serious medical conditions known minimising harm and making a first aider aware of what to tell medical services.

Furthermore, companies like Clever Medkit have developed first aid kits to make first aid more time-efficient; their kit keeps each type of medical supply separate with illuminated compartments, with several buttons representing common incidents (trauma, burns, eye injuries etc.). Once a button is pressed, the Clever Medkit lights up the compartments containing appropriate items for that type of incident. This kit aims to speed up the gathering of appropriate items by the first aider.

Other first aid kits are also beginning to add pop-up touch screen that presents interactive treatment guides can be used for placing video calls to physicians or caregivers; companies additionally offer the option to specialise your first aid box so people can create a kit specific to their needs, whether it's for a home or workplace setting.