

A little scientific history of the chronobiology

Julien VIREY at the dawn of Chronobiology in 1814.

Julien-Joseph VIREY (1775-1846) was a pharmacist chief of the Hospital of Val de Grace in Paris (1804-1813), and member of the Academy of Medicine. He is known as innovative pharmacist, naturalist, anthropologist and philosopher of nature. Virey was an prolific author and a scientist touches with all. Some of its many ideas were disputed sometimes hard.

A renewal of interest for its work is due to its thesis of Doctorate in medicine (Paris 1814) the first to be devoted to the biological rates/rhythms. For Virey, they are "innate"; they are controlled by "alive clocks" themselves pulled by the periodic variations of the environment like alternation jour/nuit.

Moreover, it reports that the effects of the drugs vary according to the hour of their administration. But especially, it publishes the first quantified observation of the circadian rates/rhythms (24H.) and annual of human mortality (1807-1808). The results of statistical analyses confirm the founded good of the sights of Virey and show that the characteristics of these rates/rhythms varied little since 1807 in spite of the modifications of our environment.

It is proposed to see in Virey the founder of Chronobiology.