

**IS CONSUMPTION  
CONTAGIOUS? AND CAN  
IT BE TRANSMITTED  
BY MEANS OF FOOD?**

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Is Consumption Contagious? And Can It Be Transmitted by Means of Food? by Herbert C. Clapp

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**HERBERT C. CLAPP**

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"A disbelief in the contagion of consumption is highly favorable to the spread of that disease (if it can really be propagated in that mode), inasmuch as in private practice and both civil and military hospitals no measures of prevention are employed." — *Principal Diseases of the Interior Valley of North America. Vol. II. By Daniel Drake, M. D.*

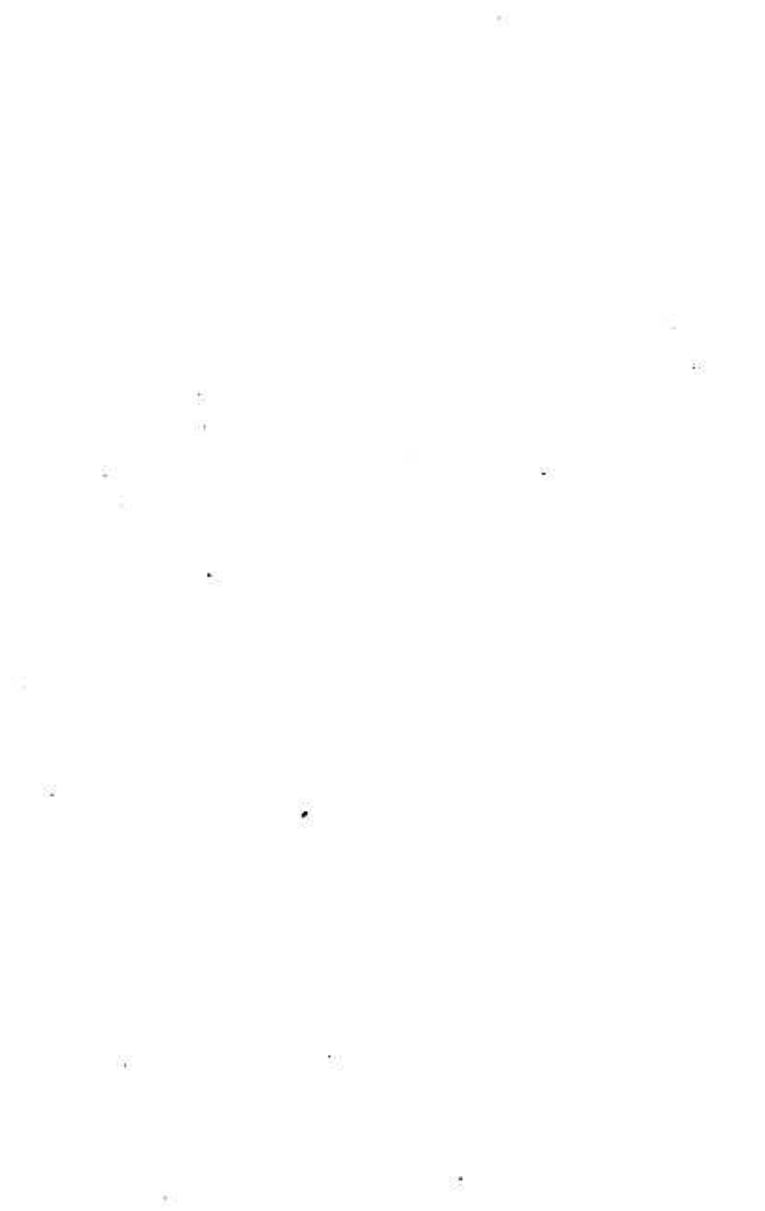


Figure 1: A 3D scatter plot showing the distribution of 1000 simulated data points in a 3D space. The axes are labeled  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$ . The points are scattered throughout the volume, with a higher density in the lower-left region. A small black dot is visible near the center of the distribution.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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It is not from any desire to create a few hours' "sensation," or to gratify a gaping curiosity, or even to attempt to settle any purely abstract and theoretical discussion, that I have prepared the following pages, but because I have become thoroughly imbued with the great importance of the subject, and feel impelled by an irresistible urging to point out and emphasize, by word and implication, its exceedingly *practical bearings*. Consumption is such a fearfully common and fatal disease all over the world, that few questions can be more practical than those on our title-page, which involve very important methods of its propagation. To be sure, our knowledge is not sufficiently accurate to enable us to give just now, with mathematical exactness, a positive answer to these questions, but it is very doubtful if any thoughtful person can read through these seven chapters without being persuaded that there is "something in it," and that *to a certain extent* at least, and *under certain conditions*, consumption is contagious.

Some of the more important practical results to be obtained by a judicious agitation of this subject are

the following: (1.) That no person, particularly if young, should be allowed to sleep in the same bed, or even (if it can possibly be prevented) in the same room with a consumptive. (2.) That no person should be allowed to remain for too long a time in too close or too constant attendance on a consumptive. (3.) That ventilation as perfect as possible should be secured. (4.) That the most rigid inspection of all the meat that comes into our markets, particularly at the slaughter-houses, and of all the cows which furnish us milk, by competent government officials beyond the temptation of bribes, should be insisted on for the public safety.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that these points would be entirely neglected without the agitation of this subject, but it certainly supplies an incentive in their behalf of wonderful power. Those physicians who do not believe in the contagiousness of consumption may, on general principles, advocate the necessity for good air, good food, and good hygienic surroundings, because it seems, on the whole, the proper thing to do; but such general advice as this often comes with very little force, and they frequently fail to insist energetically on these points when disregarded. The friends of the sick person, too, if they are not aware of the danger to which they are exposed, frequently think they cannot, and certainly often will not, carry out these necessary precautions, as almost any physician will testify. But give them a stimulus to vigorous action, convince them of the possible contagiousness of the disease, and the physician's advice will be