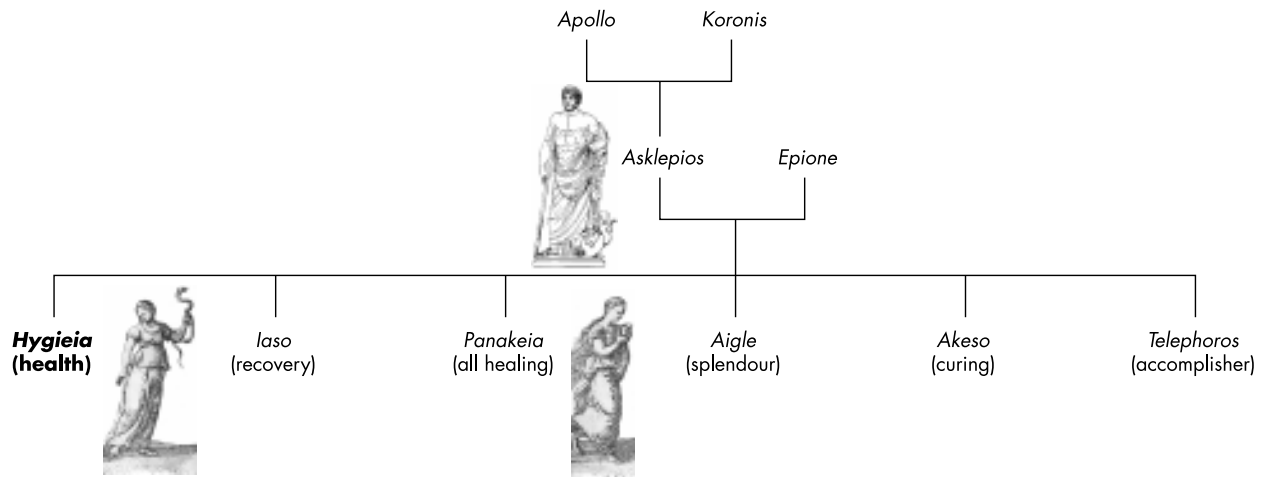


Introducing Hygieia

The family tree



In Greek mythology, Asklepios was the god of healing. He was the son of the Olympian god Apollo and a mortal woman named Koronis.

According to some ancient sources, Apollo's twin sister Artemis caught the pregnant Koronis having an affair with another man. Artemis punished the betrayal of her brother by killing Koronis. Apollo rescued the unborn child Koronis was carrying, but could not bear to look upon the symbol of his wife's adultery, so sent the child away to live with the wise centaur Chiron. The child was Asklepios, and over time, Chiron taught Asklepios the art of medicine and healing.

Some legends also tell of a meeting with two snakes that taught Asklepios how to bring the dead back to life. Askle-

prios, it is said, came across a snake tending another, ailing snake. As he watched, the snake died, but then an amazing thing happened. The snake went off into the bushes and returned a few moments later with a herb. The snake placed the herb on the dead snake, and after a short time, the snake revived.

Asklepios developed a huge following as his skills as a great healer became known. The cult of Asklepios is well documented and Hippocrates is thought to have been a member. Asklepios had many children with his wife Epione, including Hygieia, who was seen as the protector of mortal health. Shrines were built throughout the ancient world to Asklepios and Hygieia, where people would go to be healed.

Although Asklepios was a god, there is a tradition in myth that he died a mortal death. It was believed that the god of healing dared to use his powers to bring a human back to life. Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods, reacted to this action by striking Asklepios with a thunderbolt.

The new Hygieia section of the journal will tend to emphasise the preventive end of population health with which Hygieia was associated, in contrast with Panakeia who was celebrated for therapeutic achievements.

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APHORISM OF THE MONTH

Making things happen versus watching them?

It is said that there are three types of people: people who make things happen, people who watch things happening, and people who wonder what happened. Making things happen is at the heart of public health practice, but so too is observation and reflection. A balanced public health practitioner should be neither exclusively a doer, nor observer nor analyst, the artificial dichotomy between public health practice and academic life has not served us well, we need to strive for synthesis.

JRA