



## VICTOR AUGUSTE MENARD

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### SUMMARY

Victor Menard is one of the most famous French physicians from the 19th century, who dealt with bone tuberculosis before anti-tuberculosis agents were discovered. Although his primary approach to tuberculosis of the bone was conservative, he also described important surgical techniques. His most well-known study is his description of costotransversectomy, published in 1894.

**Key words:** Victor Menard, spinal tuberculosis, Pott disease, costotransversectomy.

**Level of evidence:** Biography, Level V.

### ÖZET

Victor Menard, antibiyotik tedavisinin olmadığı bir dönemde kemik tüberkülozu tedavisi ile uğraşmış 19. Yüzyılın en önemli Fransız hekimlerindedir. Kendisinin kemik tüberkülozundaki öncelikli yaklaşımı konservatif tedavi de olsa omurga cerrahisinde sık kullanılan kostotransversektomi tekniğini 1894 yılında tanımlamıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Victor Menard, Spinal tüberküloz, Pott hastalığı, kostatransversektomi.

**Kanıt Düzeyi:** Biyografi, Düzey V

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**Received:** 1st June, 2013  
**Accepted:** 16th September, 2013

## INTRODUCTION:

Victor Auguste Menard is one of the most famous French physicians. Although he lived 140 years after Percival Pott, he valued Pott's legacy, especially with regard to tuberculosis. In a period without antibiotics, he carried out a unique approach to tuberculosis patients.

## BIOGRAPHY:

Victor Menard was born in 1854 in Nant, France, and died in 1935 when he was 81 years old.

Victor Menard carried out the treatment of patients with bone and joint tuberculosis for many years at the Maritime Hospital of Berck, located on the north coast of Normandy, which he established in 1882, and he trained many physicians in this hospital (Figure-1)<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure-1.** The Maritime Hospital of Berck

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPINE SURGERY:

He had many visitors from many parts of the world to discuss his treatment methods for spine and hip tuberculosis. Although he was an

orthopedist, he performed a great deal of work on the non-surgical treatment of tuberculosis<sup>3</sup>.

As a philosophy, he accepted that it was not important to deal with local involvements of the skeletal system, and tuberculosis should be accepted as a systemic disease for the treatment approach. To this end, he immobilized patients for a long time, with very strict hygienic conditions and plenty of sun (Figure-2).



**Figure-2.** Ward for patients with tuberculosis

His 1,100-bed hospital was close to the shores of the English Channel, in a climate where the weather and view was suitable and plenty of sun was available. Menard was a physician who consistently applied the 'Sanatorium' treatment for bone tuberculosis.

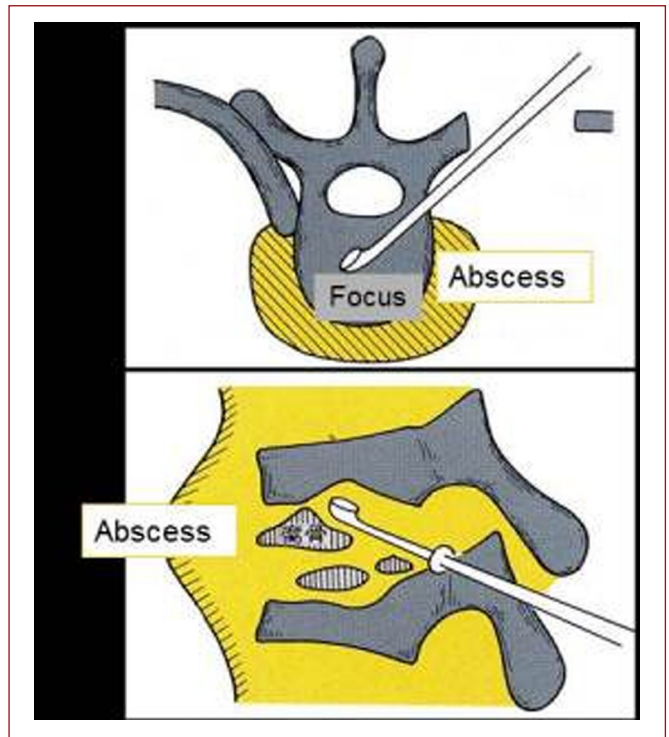
Although he was a conservative physician, he also defined certain surgical applications in spine surgery that made his name immortal<sup>4-5</sup>.

In 1894, he published the surgical result of the treatment of three patients with Pott paraplegia. He treated each patient with a different surgical intervention. The result of the patient who received laminectomy was unsuccessful. In another patient, the abscess could not be drained

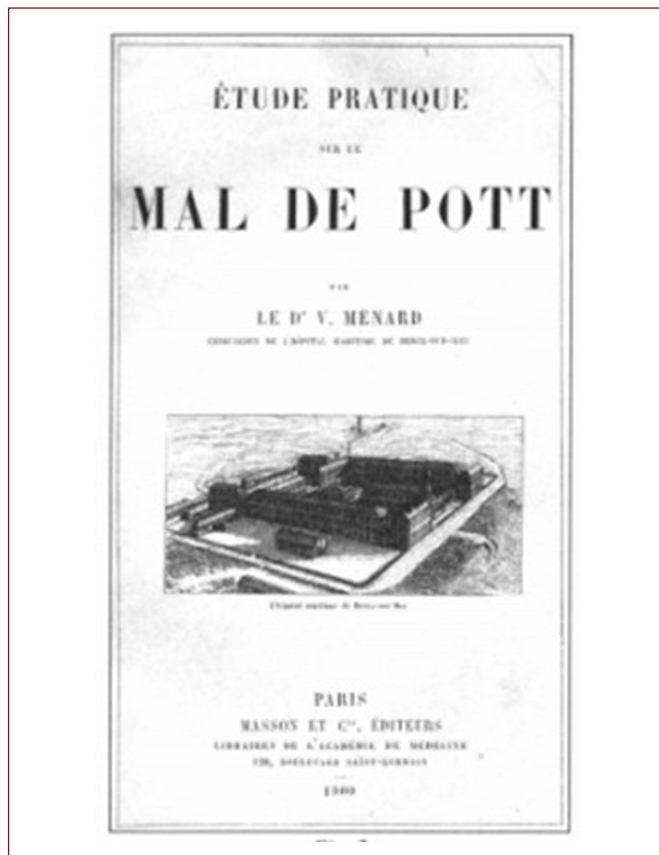
properly. In the last patient, as the surgical process was performed in a better planned way, the abscess was drained successfully and the paraplegia of the patient was recovered. This was the first ‘costotransversectomy’ operation in history<sup>4</sup> (Figure-3).

This operation was then modified and popularized by many surgeons. One of the most famous of these surgeons was Dr Capener.

After his initial definition, in his next article he published the results for 23 patients. They generally showed improvement in terms of neurology, but there were two main problems with the procedure, super-infection and outside drainage of the sinus tract. Both complications resulted because these procedures were performed without antibiotherapy (Figure-4).



**Figure-4.** Costotransversectomy



**Figure-3.** Menard’s Pott publication

The first drug for tuberculosis was streptomycin, found in 1947. This was followed by PAS (paraaminosalicylic acid) in 1949 and isoniazide in 1952. Subsequently, therefore, the procedure defined by Capener in 1954 resulted in better results for the treatment of spine tuberculosis, due to the effect of antibiotics<sup>(1)</sup>. Antibiotic treatment terminated the conservative treatment approach to which Dr. Menard dedicated his life.

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