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## ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS

### The Physician's Pulse Watch



An eccentric experimentalist and lifelong asthmatic, Sir John Floyer (1649–1734) had earned his M.D. from Oxford and a lifetime appointment as Justice of the Peace from Lichfield before receiving his politically-linked knighthood. Ridiculed for advocating cold hydrotherapy, then hailed for penning a classic treatise on asthma, Floyer dedicated the first of his two “pulse” volumes to a British monarch as self-obsessed as himself about personal health, Queen Anne. When his fellow politician from nearby Coventry, sheriff Samuel Watson, moved to London as a clockmaker and then Royal Mathematician-in-Ordinary, Floyer popularized that horologist’s use of a seconds hand and a stopping lever in watches designed for taking the pulse. As pictured above from the Huston Rare Book Room of the Wood Library-Museum, Floyer’s 1707 volume of *The Physician's Pulse Watch* revolutionized clinical monitoring and diagnosis by quantifying “the natural pulse and the excesses and defects from this . . .” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. This image appears in color in the *Anesthesiology Reflections* online collection available at [www.anesthesiology.org](http://www.anesthesiology.org).)

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