Principles of Public Health Exam 1 (Sample)

Study Guide

Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- **Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,**
- **Improve accuracy and speed,**
- **Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and**
- **Approach the exam with greater confidence.**

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here’s how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don’t just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There’s no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

1. Which of the following is NOT one of the four factors that affect the health of a community?

A. Physical

B. Social and Cultural

C. Community Organization

D. Heredity

2. What portion of the federal budget does the Department of Health and Human Services account for?

A. 10 percent

B. 25 percent

C. 5 percent

D. 40 percent

3. Which of the following is one of the five sciences of public health?

A. Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Environmental Health, Health and Policy Management

B. Epidemiology, Microbiology, Immunology, Pathology, Pharmacology

C. Public Health, Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy

D. Genetics, Ecology, Microbiology, Immunology, Virology

4. Koch's postulates are used to establish what relationship?

A. The causative link between a microbe and disease

B. Development of vaccines

C. The spread of epidemics

D. The route of transmission

5. Which term is used to describe the study of distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations?

A. Etiology

B. Anthroponoses

C. Epidemiology

D. Zoonoses

6. Which measure compares one part of data to another part?

A. Ratio

B. Rates/Proportion

C. Relative risk ratios

D. Infectivity

7. Which of the following is an example of professional health organizations?

A. March of Dimes, Muscular Dystrophy Association

B. Gates Foundation, Commonwealth Foundation

C. World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control

D. American Public Health Association, American Medical Association

8. Epidemic problems in major cities occurred during which century?

A. 18th Century

B. 19th Century

C. 17th Century

D. 20th Century

9. Which of the following is an example of a nongovernmental service for the American Red Cross?

A. Blood drives

B. Disaster relief operations

C. Emergency medical training programs

D. Public health policy advocacy

10. Which of the following are determinants of health?

A. Heredity, Environmental, Health Care Services, Behavior

B. Diet, Exercise, Sleep, Stress

C. Education, Income, Housing, Access to care

D. Genetics, Biology, Public Policy, Culture

Answers

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. D
8. B
9. A
10. A

Explanations

1. Which of the following is NOT one of the four factors that affect the health of a community?

A. Physical

B. Social and Cultural

C. Community Organization

D. Heredity

The main idea is that a community's health is shaped by the environment and social fabric in which people live. The physical environment includes things like clean air, safe housing, and access to resources. The social and cultural environment covers norms, education, income, and beliefs that influence health behaviors. Community organization refers to leadership, networks, and the community's ability to mobilize and access services. Heredity, or genetic inheritance, affects individual health risk but is not a defining factor of the community-level environment or organization in this framework. So heredity is not part of the four factors that influence community health.

2. What portion of the federal budget does the Department of Health and Human Services account for?

A. 10 percent

B. 25 percent

C. 5 percent

D. 40 percent

A key idea here is the scale of federal health-related spending. The Department of Health and Human Services is the largest federal department in terms of outlays, largely because Medicare and Medicaid—and related health programs—drive a big share of spending, along with NIH and other health initiatives. Because of these substantial programs, the department typically accounts for about a quarter of the federal budget, roughly 25 percent. The exact share can vary a bit from year to year, but 25 percent is the commonly cited figure and fits the choice given. The other options are either too small or too large to reflect the department's overall footprint within federal spending.

3. Which of the following is one of the five sciences of public health?

A. Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Environmental Health, Health and Policy Management

B. Epidemiology, Microbiology, Immunology, Pathology, Pharmacology

C. Public Health, Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy

D. Genetics, Ecology, Microbiology, Immunology, Virology

The question tests which disciplines are recognized as the five core sciences of public health. Public health relies on these lenses to study population health, measure outcomes, and design effective interventions. The five core sciences are epidemiology (how disease occurs and spreads in groups), biostatistics (the methods for analyzing health data and drawing valid conclusions), social and behavioral sciences (how behavior and social factors influence health), environmental health (how the environment affects health and safety), and health policy and management (how health systems are organized, financed, and led to improve health outcomes). This combination provides both the tools to measure health and the contexts in which health is produced and managed, making it the best fit. Other options mix in biomedical sciences like microbiology, immunology, pathology, and pharmacology, which are essential to medicine and laboratory research but not the five core public health sciences as a framework. Another choice lists professional fields or non-discipline groupings rather than the specific public health science domains. A final set includes broader life sciences rather than the established public health disciplines.

4. Koch's postulates are used to establish what relationship?

A. The causative link between a microbe and disease

B. Development of vaccines

C. The spread of epidemics

D. The route of transmission

These postulates test causality between a microbe and a disease. They provide a step-by-step approach to show that a specific microorganism causes a particular illness. First, the microbe must be found in individuals with the disease and not in healthy individuals. Second, it must be isolated in pure culture. Third, introducing it into a healthy host should reproduce the disease. Fourth, the same microbe must be recovered from the experimentally infected host. This sequence links the organism to the disease rather than just association or how the disease spreads. It's not about developing vaccines, describing transmission routes, or general patterns of epidemics; those are related to vaccine development and epidemiology, not proving causation. In practice, some diseases don't fit these strict criteria due to ethical limits on human experiments, organisms that can't be cultured, or diseases caused by multiple factors, but the principle remains: Koch's postulates are about establishing a causal link between a microbe and disease.

5. Which term is used to describe the study of distribution and determinants of health-related states or events in specified populations?

A. Etiology

B. Anthroponoses

C. Epidemiology

D. Zoonoses

Epidemiology describes how health-related states or events are distributed in specified populations and what determines them. Distribution means looking at patterns across who is affected, where they are, and when the events occur—such as differences by age, location, or season. Determinants are the factors that influence risk, including exposures, behaviors, and environmental or social conditions. By examining these elements, epidemiologists identify at-risk groups, explore potential causes, measure disease burden, and guide public health actions to prevent and control problems. This focus on population patterns and causes sets it apart from other terms: etiolog y studies causes of disease, often at an individual level, while anthroponoses and zoonoses describe types of diseases by transmission between humans or between animals and humans, not the study discipline itself.

6. Which measure compares one part of data to another part?

A. Ratio

B. Rates/Proportion

C. Relative risk ratios

D. Infectivity

A ratio is a way to express how much of one part of data there is relative to another part. It simply divides one quantity by another, making it easy to compare two subgroups or conditions within the data—for example, the number of cases in one group versus another. This contrasts with rates, which add a time component (like cases per person-year), and proportions, which relate a part to the whole. Infectivity is a property of a pathogen, not a measure comparing parts of data. Relative risk is itself a specific type of ratio used to compare incidence between groups, but the general concept described by "one part of data to another part" is best captured by the broad idea of a ratio.

7. Which of the following is an example of professional health organizations?

A. March of Dimes, Muscular Dystrophy Association

B. Gates Foundation, Commonwealth Foundation

C. World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control

D. American Public Health Association, American Medical Association

Professional health organizations are membership-based groups formed by health professionals to advance the field through standards, education, and advocacy. Among these options, the pair that fits this description is the American Public Health Association and the American Medical Association. APHA brings together public health professionals to promote policy, ethics, and practice in public health; AMA represents physicians, guiding clinical practice and medical standards and advocating for physicians and patients. The other choices fall into different categories: disease-specific charitable organizations, philanthropic foundations, or government/public health agencies, none of which are professional associations of health professionals.

8. Epidemic problems in major cities occurred during which century?

A. 18th Century

B. 19th Century

C. 17th Century

D. 20th Century

Urban epidemics in major cities arose prominently in the 19th century as cities expanded rapidly but sanitation lagged behind. The rapid growth of urban populations created crowded living conditions and contaminated water supplies, which fueled outbreaks of diseases like cholera that struck big cities hardest. A key moment was the London cholera outbreak of 1854, where John Snow linked transmission to a contaminated water pump, demonstrating a waterborne cause and triggering public health reforms. This led to the building of modern sewer systems and broader sanitation improvements, marking the rise of organized urban public health measures. With these advancements, the frequency and impact of epidemics in large cities diminished as the century progressed and into the 20th century. While earlier centuries had outbreaks, they did not pattern as strongly across major cities in the same way, and the 20th century saw further reductions due to vaccines and public health infrastructure.

9. Which of the following is an example of a nongovernmental service for the American Red Cross?

A. Blood drives

B. Disaster relief operations

C. Emergency medical training programs

D. Public health policy advocacy

Blood drives illustrate a nongovernmental service because they are direct public health actions delivered by the American Red Cross as a private nonprofit. Volunteers organize donation sites, collect blood, and supply it to hospitals, all outside of government-operated programs and funding. It's a community-facing service supported by donations and volunteers, not a government function. In contrast, disaster relief operations often involve government coordination and funding, and public health policy advocacy focuses on influencing laws rather than delivering a direct service.

10. Which of the following are determinants of health?

A. Heredity, Environmental, Health Care Services, Behavior

B. Diet, Exercise, Sleep, Stress

C. Education, Income, Housing, Access to care

D. Genetics, Biology, Public Policy, Culture

Determinants of health are the broad factors that shape health outcomes across a population, spanning biology, environment, health care, and personal behavior. The best option includes four primary domains: heredity (genetics) provides innate biological risk; the environment encompasses physical and social surroundings that influence exposure and opportunities; health care services access and quality affect prevention, early detection, and treatment; and behavior covers lifestyle choices that modify risk. Together, these four areas capture the key ways health is produced and maintained. Other choices fall short because they either focus only on individual behaviors without considering biology or health systems, or they emphasize social determinants without including genetics or environment.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

https://principlesofpublichealth1.examzify.com

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!