

WJEC GCSE History of Medicine Practice Test (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

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- 1. Approximately how many seamen were treated annually at the Royal Hamadryad Hospital in Cardiff?**
 - A. 5,000**
 - B. 10,000**
 - C. 15,000**
 - D. 20,000**

- 2. Cadwaladr left Crimea due to which illnesses?**
 - A. Cholera and dysentery**
 - B. Malaria and fever**
 - C. Pneumonia and cough**
 - D. Typhoid and scarlet fever**

- 3. How did the Royal Society change medicine?**
 - A. Reduced the emphasis on experimentation**
 - B. Encouraged scientific enquiry**
 - C. Expanded humoral theory**
 - D. Discontinued clinical trials**

- 4. What was one of the causes of typhoid?**
 - A. Contaminated water**
 - B. Contaminated air**
 - C. Contaminated soil**
 - D. Contaminated food**

- 5. Black Death is dated to which century?**
 - A. 13th**
 - B. 14th**
 - C. 15th**
 - D. 16th**

- 6. Which of the following lists four types of alternative treatments that people may use instead of visiting a doctor?**
 - A. Hydrotherapy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, hypnotherapy**
 - B. Massage therapy, yoga, meditation, herbalism**
 - C. Homeopathy, reflexology, aromatherapy, acupuncture**
 - D. Chiropractic, physiotherapy, surgery, chemotherapy**

- 7. Which of the following best describes Jenner's achievement?**
- A. Discovery of the smallpox vaccine**
 - B. Invention of the microscope**
 - C. Development of antibiotics**
 - D. Founding of modern surgery**
- 8. Why was public health interventionist in Coventry in the medieval period?**
- A. The church**
 - B. The monarchy**
 - C. The town council**
 - D. Merchants' guild**
- 9. Which therapy is listed as a cancer treatment alongside radiotherapy?**
- A. Chemotherapy**
 - B. Immunotherapy**
 - C. Surgery**
 - D. Vaccination**
- 10. What percentage of medieval hospitals cared for leprosy patients?**
- A. 10%**
 - B. 70%**
 - C. 50%**
 - D. 31%**

Answers

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

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Explanations

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1. Approximately how many seamen were treated annually at the Royal Hamadryad Hospital in Cardiff?

- A. 5,000
- B. 10,000**
- C. 15,000
- D. 20,000

The main idea here is the scale of medical care for sailors in a busy port. Cardiff was a major maritime hub, so the Royal Hamadryad Hospital handled a large inflow of seamen needing treatment each year. An annual figure around ten thousand fits what a busy single port hospital serving both Royal Navy and merchant seamen would see, reflecting steady, substantial demand without implying an unrealistically larger facility. Five thousand would understate the workload for a prominent port hospital, while fifteen thousand or twenty thousand would suggest an even larger operation or multiple facilities, which isn't implied by the historical context. So, around ten thousand is the best-supported estimate of the hospital's annual caseload.

2. Cadwaladr left Crimea due to which illnesses?

- A. Cholera and dysentery**
- B. Malaria and fever
- C. Pneumonia and cough
- D. Typhoid and scarlet fever

In the Crimea, disease often caused more trouble for armies than battle, and the big pattern to recognize is how outbreaks of cholera and dysentery led to rapid evacuations. Cholera brings sudden, severe dehydration, while dysentery causes painful, debilitating diarrhoea; both spread quickly in crowded camps with poor sanitation and contaminated water. That combination made these illnesses the most common reason for someone like Cadwaladr to leave the Crimea, as medical staff could not manage to keep him on campaign when these epidemics were raging. Other illnesses did occur—malaria in some marshy areas, and respiratory or feverish illnesses like pneumonia or typhoid—but they are less emblematic of the era's widespread evacuations in Crimea, making cholera and dysentery the best explanation.

3. How did the Royal Society change medicine?

- A. Reduced the emphasis on experimentation
- B. Encouraged scientific enquiry**
- C. Expanded humoral theory
- D. Discontinued clinical trials

Encouraging scientific enquiry transformed medicine. The Royal Society, founded in 1660, created a community where researchers tested ideas through observation and experiment and shared the results openly. This emphasis on evidence and reproducibility meant doctors moved away from simply accepting ancient authorities and status quo ideas, and began to base medical understanding on what could be demonstrated. As a result, knowledge about how the body works, how diseases develop, and how treatments actually work advanced more through careful investigation than tradition alone. The other options don't fit because the Society didn't reduce experimentation, nor did it promote the old humoral theory, and there wasn't a formal system of clinical trials in place to discontinue.

4. What was one of the causes of typhoid?

- A. Contaminated water**
- B. Contaminated air
- C. Contaminated soil
- D. Contaminated food

Typhoid spreads through the fecal-oral route, with the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria entering the body when people drink water or eat food tainted with human waste. In many historical outbreaks, contaminated drinking water was the main vehicle, especially in towns with poor sanitation and sewage management. This is why contaminated water is the best answer: it directly shows how typhoid is transmitted in communities, and addressing water quality and sanitation dramatically reduces its spread. Contaminated air isn't a typical transmission route for typhoid, and while contaminated food can carry the bacteria, water is the more consistent and widespread source in many outbreaks.

5. Black Death is dated to which century?

- A. 13th
- B. 14th**
- C. 15th
- D. 16th

The timing of the major outbreak defines the dating. The Black Death's most famous and devastating wave hit Europe in the mid-14th century, beginning around 1347 and spreading through 1348-1351. Since centuries are named for the period they cover, the 14th century (1301-1400) is the correct label for that defining outbreak. While earlier outbreaks occurred in other regions, the event that most people mean by the Black Death is this mid-14th-century European pandemic.

6. Which of the following lists four types of alternative treatments that people may use instead of visiting a doctor?

- A. Hydrotherapy, acupuncture, aromatherapy, hypnotherapy**
- B. Massage therapy, yoga, meditation, herbalism
- C. Homeopathy, reflexology, aromatherapy, acupuncture
- D. Chiropractic, physiotherapy, surgery, chemotherapy

The idea being tested is that people sometimes turn to treatments outside standard medical care. The best choice lists four treatments that are clearly categorized as alternative therapies people might use instead of visiting a doctor: hydrotherapy uses water for healing, acupuncture involves stimulating specific points with needles, aromatherapy uses essential oils for therapeutic effects, and hypnotherapy uses guided hypnosis to address symptoms or behaviors. These are all commonly seen as self-directed or practitioner-delivered alternatives to conventional medical visits. Other options mix in things that aren't purely alternative therapies or include conventional medical treatments like surgery or chemotherapy, which aren't considered alternatives to seeing a doctor. Some lists also include lifestyle practices rather than treatments in the strict sense. That combination makes the first option the most fitting choice.

7. Which of the following best describes Jenner's achievement?

- A. Discovery of the smallpox vaccine**
- B. Invention of the microscope**
- C. Development of antibiotics**
- D. Founding of modern surgery**

Vaccination as a preventive approach to disease: Jenner demonstrated that material from cowpox could protect against smallpox, creating the first successful vaccine and establishing inoculation to build immunity. He observed that dairy workers with cowpox rarely contracted smallpox, hypothesized that exposure to one disease could confer protection against another, and tested this by inoculating a healthy boy with cowpox material. After recovery, the boy was exposed to smallpox and did not fall ill, showing that immunity had been produced. This work launched the science of immunology and the practice of vaccination, a serious turning point in public health. It is distinct from the invention of the microscope, the development of antibiotics, or the founding of modern surgery.

8. Why was public health interventionist in Coventry in the medieval period?

- A. The church**
- B. The monarchy**
- C. The town council**
- D. Merchants' guild**

In a medieval town like Coventry, public health was handled by the local governing body—the town council. Towns were largely self-governing through a corporate body that ran daily affairs, made local by-laws, and collected taxes to fund services. This council had the authority to appoint officers who kept the streets clean, managed drains and water supplies, supervised markets, and enforced rules about waste disposal. All of these tasks were essential for keeping a crowded urban population healthier and more orderly, so it's the council that took charge of public health measures. The church played a charitable and religious role, sometimes running hospitals or offering aid, but it didn't manage the town's sanitation and infrastructure across the whole community. The monarchy's influence in a specific town was limited to charters and overarching authority, not the routine administration of public health. Merchants' guilds might support or influence certain activities, especially those relating to trade and welfare, but they didn't hold the formal authority to run public health programs. That authority and capability rested with Coventry's town council.

9. Which therapy is listed as a cancer treatment alongside radiotherapy?

- A. Chemotherapy**
- B. Immunotherapy**
- C. Surgery**
- D. Vaccination**

Cancer treatment usually combines different approaches because one method tackles the tumor in a specific way while another reaches cancer cells elsewhere. Radiotherapy targets and damages the DNA of cancer cells in a particular area, but chemotherapy circulates through the body to kill cancer cells systemically and can also make tumor cells more sensitive to radiation. That combination—chemotherapy alongside radiotherapy—is a common, well-established pairing, which is why it's the best answer here. Immunotherapy is a newer approach that boosts the immune system to fight cancer and can be used with radiotherapy in some cases, but the classic pairing emphasized in many GCSE contexts is chemotherapy. Vaccination is mainly about prevention rather than treating an existing cancer, and surgery is a separate major modality rather than the therapy listed alongside radiotherapy in this framing.

10. What percentage of medieval hospitals cared for leprosy patients?

- A. 10%**
- B. 70%**
- C. 50%**
- D. 31%**

Medieval hospitals varied a lot in what they provided, and leprosy care was not the universal purpose of most institutions. Leprosy patients were often housed in separate leprosaria or kept in isolated wards away from the general sick, rather than being treated in every hospital. The evidence indicates that only about a third of medieval hospitals included care for leprosy patients. This shows that while leprosy care existed within the hospital system, it was not the dominant function of most hospitals. The rest focused on other needs—general infirmary care, wounds, childbirth, plague, or serving the poor and travellers—reflecting how such facilities were organized and how leprosy was managed and stigmatized in medieval society.

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://wjecgcsehistoryofmed.examzify.com>

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

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