

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: PEOPLE'S HEALTH 1250-2000

KEY WORDS

Cesspits – a pit used to collect human waste

Cholera – an infectious disease of the small intestine

Conduit – a small fountain or water pipe

Ergotism – a terrible disease caused by fungus

Flagellants – people who whip themselves to try and avoid getting the plague

Gongfermers – a person who cleans out cesspits

Guilds – organisations that control how people trade on crops

Industrialisation - the development of factories/methods of production

Laissez-faire – the policy of the government leaving things to take their own course without interfering

Miasma – an invisible mist once thought to cause disease

Midden – a dunghill or pile of rubbish

Monastery - a building occupied by a community of monks

Sanitation – provision of clean drinking water

The Gin Act of 1751 – a law to reduce the consumption of spirits therefore lessening crime

and sewage systems

Welfare State - a system whereby the state undertakes to protect the health and well-being of its citizens – "nanny state"

1. MEDIEVAL

What was Medieval England like?

- Huge importance placed in the Church and this impacted on the ideas surrounding disease as they believed it was a punishment from God. Therefore acts such as flagellation was common.
- The country was divided socially into the feudal system with the minority at the top (King, Lords and Church) who tended to have access to education and the majority at the back in the form of peasants and labourers.
- **Living conditions** **Food:** Pottage was most common food and ergotism was also prevalent. Street markets used for a varied diet but old rancid meat was used in pies. The rich had access to more varied diet **Water:** Some drank from stream they shared with animals others used a well. Water carriers would collect water from the conduit and sell but no pipes into houses **Waste:** Gardens had a midden where all waste was placed, some had their own cesspits. Rakers were employed to clean streets of London. Laws to try and keep streets clean and gongfermers to empty cesspits (into streams). **Housing:** Smoke from open fire would fill the simple houses. Animals kept inside for warmth. Poor and simple housing which were often infested with lice but they did grow their own veg in gardens
- There were some positive actions regarding public health. In monasteries (where the money was due to importance in the Church) and certain town authorities (such as London). But actions such as laws regarding butchers guilds and waste disposal was inconsistent and not accessed by the masses.



2. EARLY MODERN

Change or continuity from the Medieval period?

- Period also referred to as the Renaissance and is a period of rebirth where new ideas, new trade and exploration began to flourish. People still held a lot of religious beliefs and this impacted on their approach to Public Health where God, miasma and the 4 humours were still referred to by the masses.
- **Living Conditions.** **Food:** Markets were prevalent and new foods for the rich became more common (chili and chocolate) **Water:** There were three main ways people could get access to water; (1) Pay for water to be piped to your house. (2) Collect water from a conduit (fountains provided by town councils). (3) Buy water from a water seller. **Housing:** much of the housing was in a poor state in towns with few laws to build houses of certain standards. House fires were common and would spread quickly due to closeness of dwellings. **Waste:** Waste was still being disposed of in similar ways to the Medieval era



EXAM QUESTION STEMS

Three one mark questions – give one example...Name one...Name the... What was...? (3 marks in total)

"Write a clear and organised summary that analyses..."? (9 marks)

An explanation question which will start with Why ... Why did... What caused ... What was the impact ... (10 marks)

"How far so you agree with the statement..."? (18 Marks)

EPIDEMICS

- **Black Death (Medieval)** The disease caused buboes to appear in armpit and groin along with vomiting and temperature. People believed that God, miasma and the 4 humours were to blame for this. This led to “cures” or “preventatives” such as praying, carrying posies and blood letting being used.
- **The Great Plague (Early Modern)** This was terrifying not only because of its symptoms but due to its frequency, impact and the fact no one understood it (still!) Isolation was now used and the printing of the Plague Orders of 1578 but God, miasma and 4 humours were still largely blamed
- **Cholera (Industrial)** Cholera was a water borne disease but this was unknown for a long time (people favoured miasma as the cause). Advice was printed in newspapers but very little helped. John Snow later discovered it was caused by water but few believed him at the time
- **Spanish Flu (Modern)** Dr James Niven conducted research and then reacted with practical action and publicity which had a positive impact on the outbreak in Manchester despite this it was not consistent across the country. It spread due to outbreaks in WWI trenches and killed 50 mill
- **HIV/AIDS (Modern)** HIV is the virus that can lead to AIDs which leads to an immune deficiency and is spread via body fluids. There were 5 phases: awareness, alarm, understanding, acceptance and complacency.

with cesspits, middens and waste being thrown onto the streets. Animals were also free to roam the streets and their waste was here too. Scavengers would also pick waste up from outside houses once or twice a week

- More rules and regulations were put into place regarding gin consumption but these were hard to police and the gap between the rich and the poor seemed to widen with the rich having paved streets and oil lamps.

3. INDUSTRIAL

Is this the period of the most amount of change?

- Changes in the industrial period focus around growing population, access to education, working class votes, spread of Empire, scientific discoveries, transport and communication.
- **Living Conditions** **Food:** Food was poor standard and little of it – food was also adulterated to look better than it was. **Water:** Main cause of cholera and water companies under pressure with growth in population. Poor areas still supplied by a single pump and in some areas had no access to water at all
- **Housing:** Back to back housing and slum housing were common with landlords charging high rent for substandard housing. Cellar dwellers were the once who could not afford a house above ground level (most likely to flood from cesspits) **Waste:** Sewers were not built for purpose and could not deal with the amount of human waste they needed to take away. Many houses still had middens and night soil men would empty cesspits
- Many responses due to achievements in research and science came from Edwin Chadwick and the 1848 Public health Act, the Great Stink and Bazalgette’s sewers 1852 and Pasteur’s germ Theory 1861



4. MODERN

Are we in a much better place now than we were in previous eras?

- The period saw huge changes in government, science, beliefs, work, population and leisure and all of these have had an impact on health (for the better and worse)
- **Living Standards** Obesity (linked to advertising and fast food), smoking, alcohol, overuse of mobile phone and poverty (gambling addictions) and mental health all saw living standard being easy to compare to that of the Early Modern (compare Gin Lane by Hogarth and modern day) Waste and Water are no longer issues regarding for modern era living conditions but **Food** (rationing led to some having more of a balanced diet) and **Housing** (Homes fit for heroes saw a move away from slum back-to-back housing) are along with **Air** (1950 UK consumed 200 million tonnes of coal a year which led to the Clean Air Act 1952) and **Inactivity** (use of technology and reliance on transport rather than walking)
- Huge fall away from laissez-faire government with the Liberal Reforms impacting children (Free School Meals), elderly (pension system) and workers (national insurance) saw a move towards what we understand by the Welfare State
- 1948 – birth of the NHS under the Labour government