History – Paper 1 Medicine and Germany

**Medicine in Prehistoric Times**

There is little evidence to support our knowledge on Prehistoric Medicine because none of their theories were recorded or written down – we have no real documentation of what happened.

In the prehistoric time they believed that illness was caused by evil spirits and God.

The main illnesses in those times were:
- **Broken bones** from accidents
- **Pregnancy** was very dangerous because they had no idea about germs, infection and how to correctly complete the procedure
- **Pain in joints** from always working
- **Abesses** on teeth from eating rocks

The only proper evidence we have about the study of anatomy is that cavemen knew about the heart and if it was wounded you would die – they drew this on the caves.

Due to there being no written evidence the only way historians can gain information is by looking at human remains – these are very rare and are often very damaged and rendered useless.

Treatments carried out:
- If a person was experiencing a headache then they would drill a hole in the head to release the evil spirit causing the headache (there is evidence from a remain of a skull that the instruments used were often blunt and the person doing the operation was clumsy – the bone never really grew back)
- **Various herbs** and concoctions
- Supernatural methods such as chanting and dancing to try and ward away evil spirits.
- For **broken bones** they sat in mud
- For a **burn** they used the sap from a tree

The **medicine man** was the main healer in the prehistoric times.

These treatments however did have some good effects for example the mud would actually set the bones back together in a leg like a cast we use today, they were also very healthy because they ate a lot of natural things like plants and crops.

Although the life expectancy was only 35–40, disease spread very quickly.
The Egyptians believed that disease was caused by blocked channels and undigested foods in the bowls of the stomach.

Rotting food let off gases which seeped along the channels, causing disease in different places, and preventing the normal flow of blood, air and water throughout the body.

Egyptians could identify the heart, pulse liver, brain, lungs and the blood, they didn't completely understand their roles though.

They thought that the body had over 40 different channels that carried air, blood and water to all the different parts of the body.

Healthy channels were needed for a good health.

This is partially true because we do have these so called 'channels' in our body but we call them veins and they carry blood and oxygen around the body.

They thought that they could unblock the 'channels' of the body by making people vomit, or bleed, or empty their bowels, and that this would cure sickness.

Some of their cures used what we call today sympathetic magic. For instance they used a pig's eye to try to cure blindness - they believed that the power of sight in the pig's eye would transfer to the patient's eye. All the time, however, the Egyptians believed that the gods ultimately controlled their lives. Many cures included a spell to give power to the remedy.

What Changed?
- they looked for natural causes of illness
- written records
- doctors
- limited knowledge of anatomy
- new metal instrument for surgery

What Stayed the Same?
- Herbal remedies
- Supernatural ideas - use of priests of the goddess.
- Didn't really understand how the body works
Living conditions in the middle ages

47 – 400 -> Roman - Roman York was a legionary headquarters
- Soldiers had a bath building and latrines flushed by sewers
- Fresh watershed was bought to individual houses by lead pipes
- They had a good diet

400 – 800 -> Saxon - High infant mortality because the living conditions for people went down due to the fall of the Roman Empire.
- Arthritis and Rickets were common because of malnutrition and from working too hard. People didn't have the proper food they needed.

800 – 1066 -> Viking - Rubbish and Dung was stored in wicker pits, this meant that the although dung was taken away from houses it was also stored polluting the city with bad air.
- Rotting fish bones, animal and human faeces mixed underfoot in the streets. This made the spread of disease more likely and also meant that more parasites and deathly bacteria could spread quicker.

1066 – 1400 -> Norman - Clean water supplies, it was only now that they were rebuilt after the fall of the Roman Empire, this is the first time that the progress in public health started to pick up out of the Renaissance, it wasn't until the end of the Middle Ages.
- Ses pits - lined with brick and cleaned (living conditions and public health finally picked up)
- The church started to put money back into public health

It is shown that during the Middle Ages after the fall of the Roman Empire the level of living conditions dramatically went down, the sewers, clean water supplies and public baths and toilets were destroyed, this meant people resorted back to excreting in the streets and the death rates dramatically increased.