1.15 The Role of Religion in Shaping Medical Ideas and Practice, c1250-1700: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Explain why the Church's authority over medical ideas and practice declined between c1250 and 1700.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the role of universities and monastic learning in the medieval period
- the impact of Renaissance anatomists and increased dissection

You must also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

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2 'Religious belief was the main force shaping medical practice in Britain up to 1700.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer:
- the role of the Church in running hospitals and providing spiritual care
- the rise of anatomical study and professional regulation from the sixteenth century

You must also use information of your own. 4 marks are available for spelling, punctuation, grammar and the accurate use of specialist terminology.

(Total for Question 2 is 20 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.15 The Role of Religion in Shaping Medical Ideas and Practice, c1250-1700: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 1 Identifies one or two simple reasons for the decline in Church authority, with little or no supporting detail. **1-3**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain one or two reasons, supported by some accurate detail and making links to the process of change. **4-6**

Level 3 Explains several reasons for the decline of Church authority, supported by accurate and relevant detail and showing how these reasons contributed to change over time. **7-9**

Level 4 Explains in a well-developed and balanced way a range of connected reasons for the decline in Church authority, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail and analysis of how these factors interacted over time. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Universities and monastic learning initially reinforced Church authority because medical teaching relied on Galen and on texts preserved and taught within ecclesiastical institutions, giving the Church intellectual control over medical ideas in c1250-c1500.
- Renaissance anatomists, such as Vesalius in the sixteenth century, promoted dissection and direct observation, exposing errors in Galenic anatomy and encouraging a shift from textual authority to empirical study, which undermined the Church's control over medical knowledge.
- The growing status of professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Physicians (founded 1518), shifted licensing and professional authority away from purely ecclesiastical structures towards secular, professional regulation.
- Religious changes, including the Reformation and the dissolution of some monastic hospitals in England, reduced the institutional reach of the medieval Church over hospitals and care, creating space for more secular or lay involvement in medical practice.
- Printing and the spread of medical books allowed new ideas to circulate more widely, enabling lay practitioners and physicians to challenge established religiously based authorities.
- These factors interacted: institutional changes reduced church control, empirical anatomy provided intellectual grounds to question church-supported authorities, and professional and technological changes (printing, colleges) institutionalised alternatives to ecclesiastical dominance.

Question 2

Level 1 Shows limited knowledge of medical practice and religion c1250-1700 and offers a simple, unsupported judgement on the statement. **1-4**

Level 2 Shows some relevant knowledge and begins to weigh the evidence for and against the statement, but the argument is not fully developed. **5-8**

Level 3 Shows good knowledge and offers a balanced discussion of religious and non-religious influences, reaching a supported judgement on how far the statement is accurate. **9-12**

Level 4 Shows precise, well-selected knowledge and provides a sustained, balanced and analytical evaluation of both sides, reaching a clear and well-argued judgement on how far religion was the main shaping force by 1700. **13-16**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that support the statement: the Church and religious institutions ran many hospitals and provided spiritual care, prayer and sacraments that shaped how patients were treated and what aims care pursued in the medieval period; religious explanations for disease, such as punishment or test, guided lay and clerical responses including pilgrimage and confession.
- Arguments against the statement: by the sixteenth century empiricism and anatomy challenged purely religious explanations; Vesalius and other anatomists promoted dissection and observation, undermining reliance on textual authority and religion as the sole arbiter of medical truth.
- Arguments against the statement: the foundation and growing authority of bodies like the Royal College of Physicians, and the spread of printed medical texts, created secular professional structures that shaped practice alongside and increasingly over religious influence.
- Balanced points: religion continued to shape ideas and practices such as palliative care, ritual healing and charitable institutions across the period, but its dominance declined as scientific methods, professional regulation and changing institutions gained influence, so the extent of religion's primacy varied across time and context.
- Judgement: a strong answer will argue that religion was a major shaping force especially in the medieval period, but that by 1700 its dominance had been significantly eroded by intellectual, institutional and technological changes; the conclusion should assess continuity and change and support the verdict with precise examples.

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