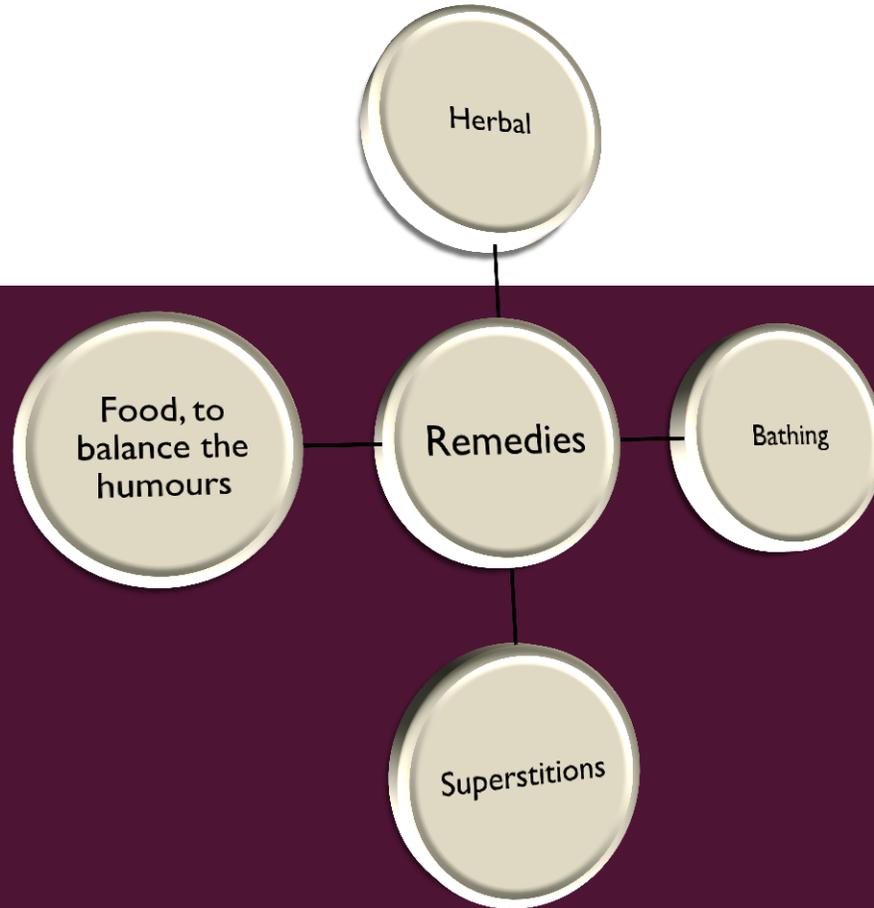


MEDIEVAL TREATMENT & PREVENTION

SUMMARY / REVISION MATERIAL

9-1



ASTROLOGY



Physicians consulted star charts when diagnosing illness. These were important in prescribing treatment which varied according to the horoscope of the patient.

The alignment of the planets was then checked

Herb gathering, bleeding, purging and operations, even cutting hair and nails had to be done at the right time



FOUR HUMOURS

Each symptom was broken down by the physician and treated separately as each symptom was an imbalance in the humours.

Blood Letting:

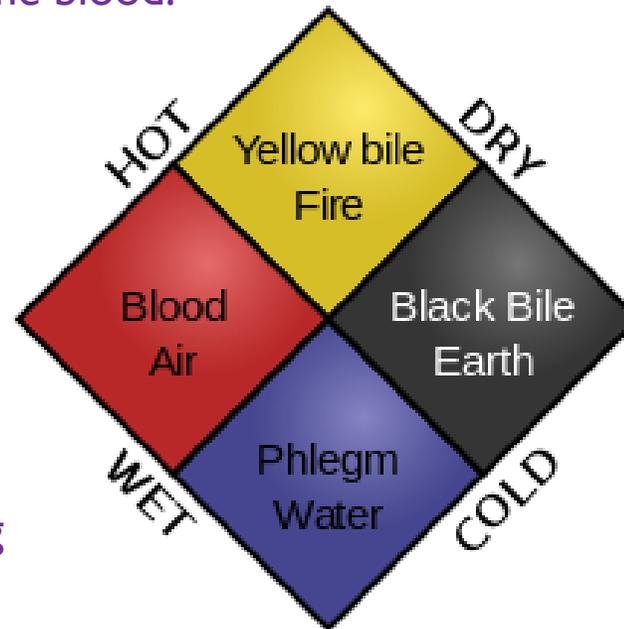
This was the most common treatment for an imbalance in the humours, the idea being to remove the bad humour in the blood.

Who carried out bleeding?

- Barber Surgeons
- Wise women
- Parish constable

Problems:

- Patients died by being bled too much / long

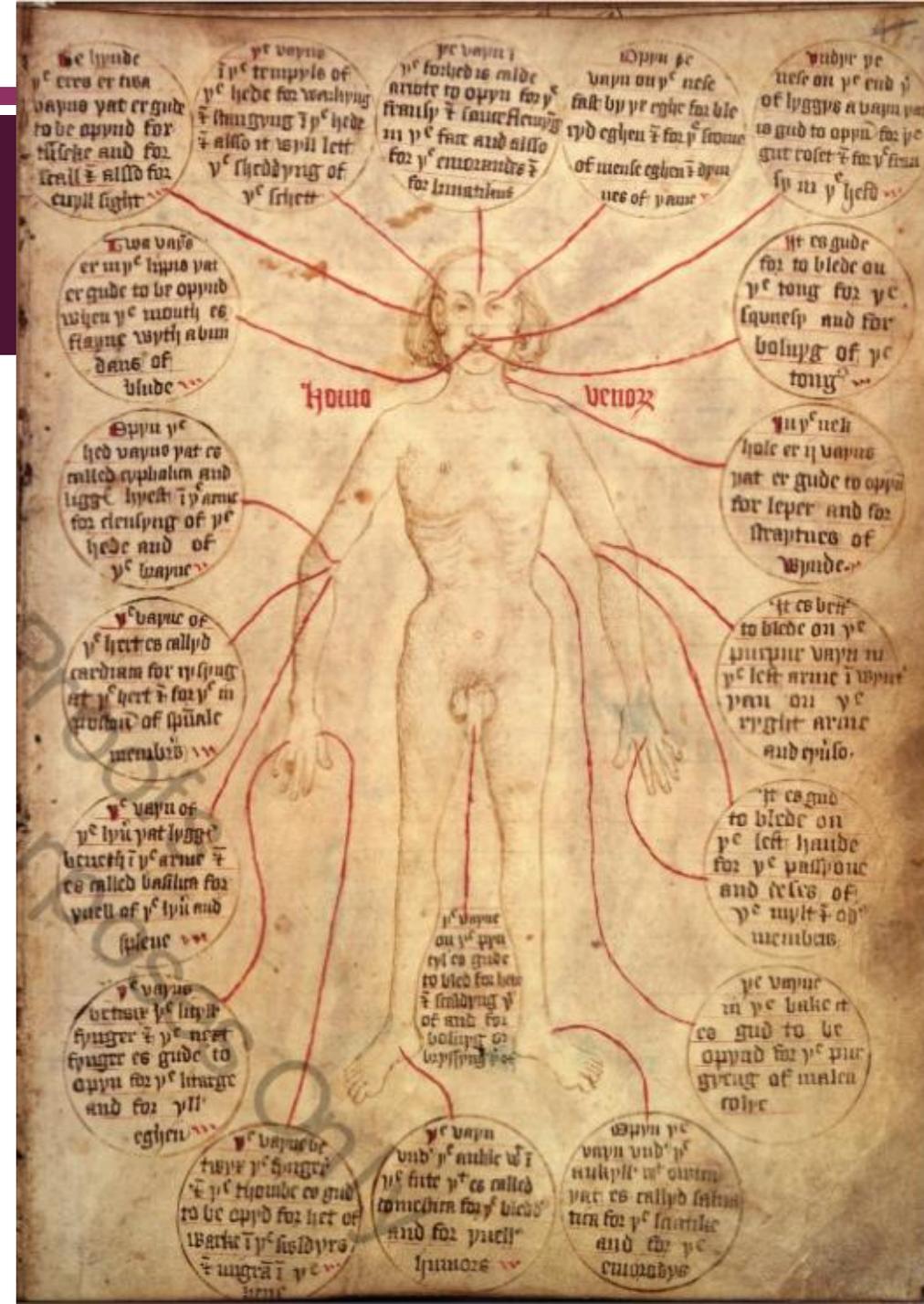


Type	Method	Uses
Cutting a vein	This involved cutting open a vein with a lancet or other sharp instrument. Blood was usually let from a vein near the elbow, because it was easy to access.	The most straightforward method of bleeding. Phlebotomy charts like the vein man (see Source B) were used to show points in the body where bleeding was recommended for specific illnesses.
Leeches	Freshwater leeches were collected, washed and kept hungry for a day before being placed on the skin. Bleeding might continue for up to 10 hours after the leech was full.	Used for people whose age or condition made traditional bleeding too dangerous.
Cupping	The skin was pierced with a knife or a pin, or even scratched with fingernails, until it was bleeding. A heated cup was placed over the cuts to create a vacuum. This drew blood out of the skin.	Used for women, children and the very old. People believed different areas treated different illnesses. For example, people believed that cupping on the back of the neck was good for eye trouble, bad breath and facial acne.

A VEIN MAN

A vein man, or phlebotomy chart. This picture was printed in a manual belonging to the York Barbers in the late 15th century. It shows points on the body where blood-letting should happen, matching different ailments with different places on the body. For example, if a patient was suffering from depression, the recommendation was to bleed them from a vein in the back.

- 1) Set the yellow index of the sun to today's date
- 2) Set the black index of the moon to the correct phase of the moon for today [Check here](#)
- 3) Read the zodiac sign which the index of the moon points to
- 4) Look at the man of signs and see which part of the body is governed by that sign of the zodiac
- 5) DO NOT perform surgery on that part of the body today, the patient will surely die!



URINE CHARTS

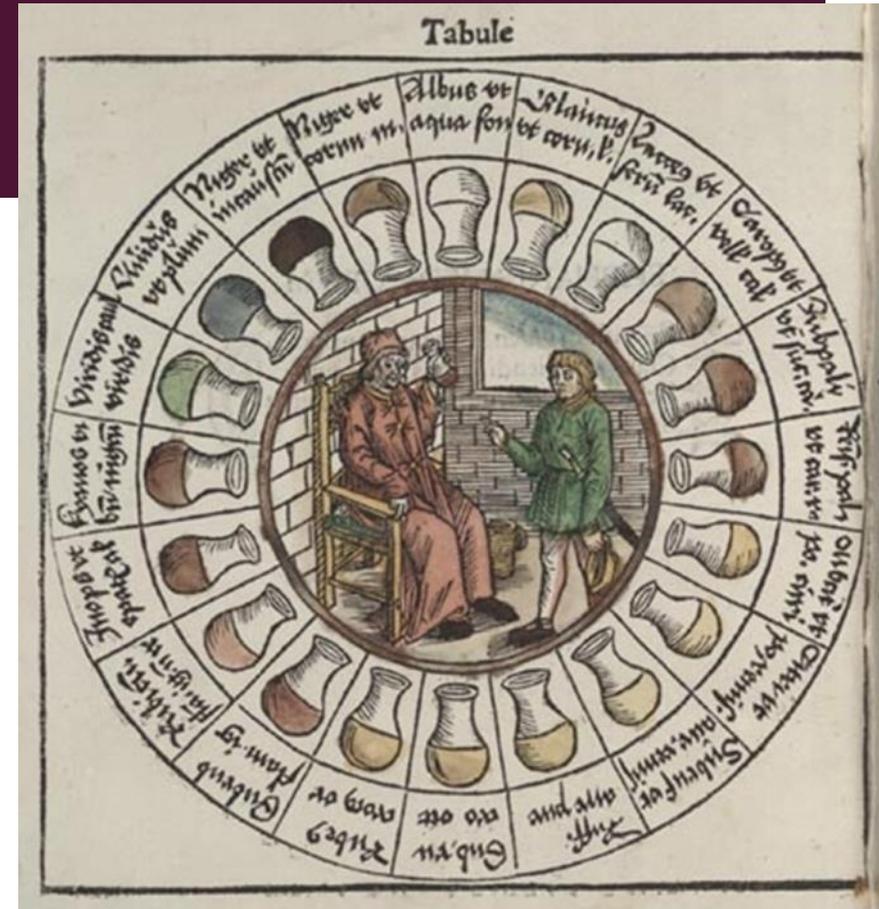
Remember to check urine three times. Straight away (nice and warm!), after an hour, and when completely cooled.

1) Hold the flask of urine up to the light to test its 'thickness'. Can you see the joints of your fingers through the flask? If so it may be a little thin. This may suggest epilepsy.

2) Now, check the 'contents' of the urine by gently shaking it. Check for any oily stuff floating on the surface, dusty sediment or bits on the bottom. Fire and air, being the lighter elements, rise to the top, showing something wrong with the patient's head. Grit on the bottom, being earthy, suggests trouble with the kidneys or arthritis in the feet.

3) Check the colour against this chart. Very dark means a gross excess of black bile.

4) Taste the urine. Is it sweet or salty? Salty suggests an excess of blood.



URINE:

- **Although medieval physicians didn't blame people's urine for making them ill, they did carefully examine it.**
- **They thought this the best way to check the balance of the humours inside the body.**
- **This would be done by checking the colour, thickness, smell and even taste of the urine.**

PURGING



Because it was believed the humours were affected by the foods eaten, a common treatment was purging the digestive system.

- Patients were given something to make them vomit (scammony, aniseed, parsley)
- Sometimes poison was given so it was best to vomit quickly
- Laxatives or enema to clear out the bowels
- Enema's would normally be mixed with water, honey, oil, wheat bran, soap and herbs. It would be squirted into the anus using a greased pipe fixed to a pigs bladder.



HERBAL REMEDIES

Remedies were usually given as herbal infusions to drink, sniff or bathe in.

Some of which are still used today (aloe vera to improve digestion)

Most common herbs:

- Mint
- Camomile
- Rose oils
- Tamarind
- Almonds
- Saffron
- Butter
- Absinth
- Turpentine
- Corals
- Ginger
- Pepper

Some of these will only have been available to richer patients



MEDIEVAL RECIPES

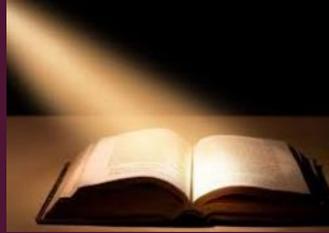
An ointment for wounds

A cleansing and healing ointment... Take the yolk of an egg and an equal amount of honey, and double the amount of a suitable oil, and mix them together like an ointment.

A powder for headache

Take hillwort* and pound it with flour and give him to drink in hot water, and keep him fasting till it be noon.

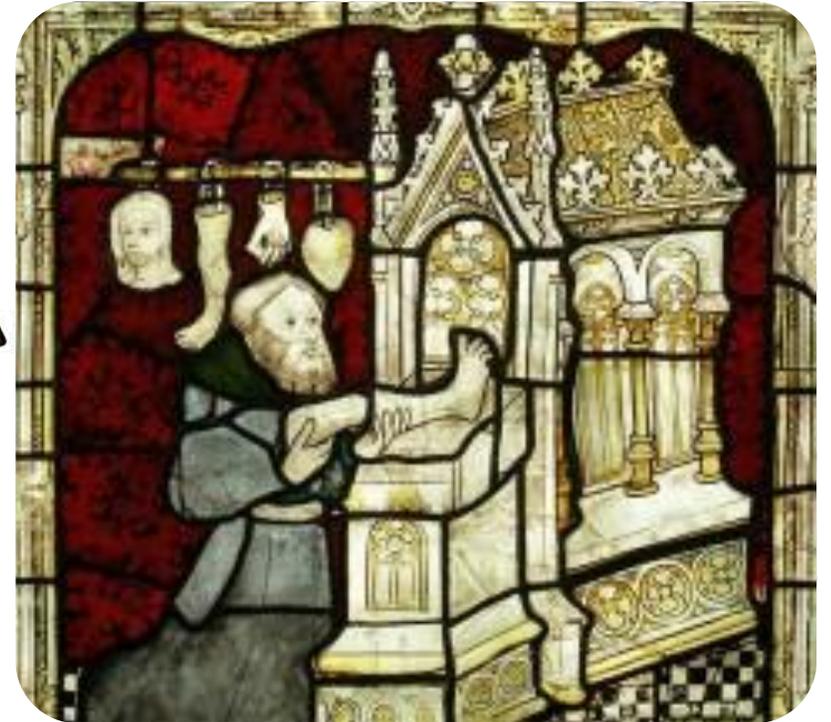
RELIGIOUS & SUPERNATURAL



The Church taught that disease was sent from God as a punishment for sin.

Treatment should also involve (at least partially) something supernatural:

- Healing prayers and incantations (spells)
- Praying for a special mass to be said
- Fasting (going without food)
- Pilgrimages to tombs of people noted for healing powers



A Pilgrim might:

- Touch a holy relic such as a piece of the 'true' cross, or bones of a saint
- Pray for God to help heal your illness
- Present an offering at a shrine, maybe an image of the body part to be healed, made from wax, precious metals and jewels (depending on wealth)
- Lighting a candle as long as the body part you want healed

RELIGIOUS TREATMENTS CONTINUED...



If prayers and offerings didn't work there were other supernatural remedies:

- **Chanting incantations (spells)**
- **Charms and amulets to heal symptoms / ward off diseases**
- **Do Nothing! – They believed God sent it to clean the soul from sin, so it needed to run its course. Taking medicine might cure your sickness but your soul would still be stained, therefore not getting into heaven**



THE KING'S HEALING POWER



During the King's coronation, his hands were rubbed with holy oil, which gave him healing powers

The King's touch was particularly effective against Scrofula, a form of Tuberculosis.

This also helped kings show their Divine Right (chosen by God to be king)

King Edward I tried to touch 2000 people per year



BATHING

Warm baths were regularly prescribed to help the body draw in heat to help dissolve blockages in the humours, to steam out impurities and ease aching joints.

Herbal remedies could also be given in this way. Various plants and herbs were added to the bath water to help.

Those suffering from paralysis were advised to boil a fox in water and then bathe in it, they believed the quick and nimble properties of a fox would be transferred to the patient through the water!



Do your own scroll of Regimen Sanitatis

PREVENTION:

There was a focus on prevention, this was seen as safer since treatments were hit and miss in their success.

- **The Church** – Live a life free of sin and you won't be sick, pay your tithes so minor sins were forgiven quickly
- **Hygiene** – Keep yourself clean following the Regimen Sanitatis >>>
 - This was based on Hippocrates' & Galen's work. Usually only the rich would have a plan written for them
- **Bathing** was a way of keeping Miasma away (public baths 'stewes' for the poor), the very poor swam in rivers. EVERYONE no matter how rich washed their hands before and usually after meals as they believed cleanliness was next to Godliness
- **Homecare** – People tried to keep their houses smelling sweet and fresh. Floors were swept regularly and rushes put down to soak up mess.
- **Diet** – Eating too much was strongly discouraged, Edward I died from dysentery. Vomiting and laxatives were very common.

Regimen Sanitatis

Take moderate exercise

Do not overeat

Adjust your diet to the amount of exercise you do

Make sure you get enough sleep - but not too much

Avoid stress

Keep clean with regular bathing

Breathe clean, eastern or northern air

Live away from animals and not too close to the ground floor

Avoid excessive cold, heat, dryness or humidity

Stay on friendly terms with your neighbours

Do not have too much sex

Avoid barking dogs, drunks and bandits, since these cause anxiety and therefore disease

PURIFYING THE AIR



Spreading sweet herbs like lavender was supposed to purify the miasma (bad air). This would be carried in a posy or a piece of jewellery called a pomander.

Magistrates or noblemen made laws that no rotting animals were left lying around and pulled down or cleaned really bad public toilets.



9-1: Middle Ages – Who treated the sick?

Medieval Surgeon

A 15th Century barber surgeon such as this one would perform simple operations such as tooth pulling and blood letting. This surgeon is Alex Ledell who worked for King Edward IV. In 1475 he is recorded as receiving 6 pence per day wages.

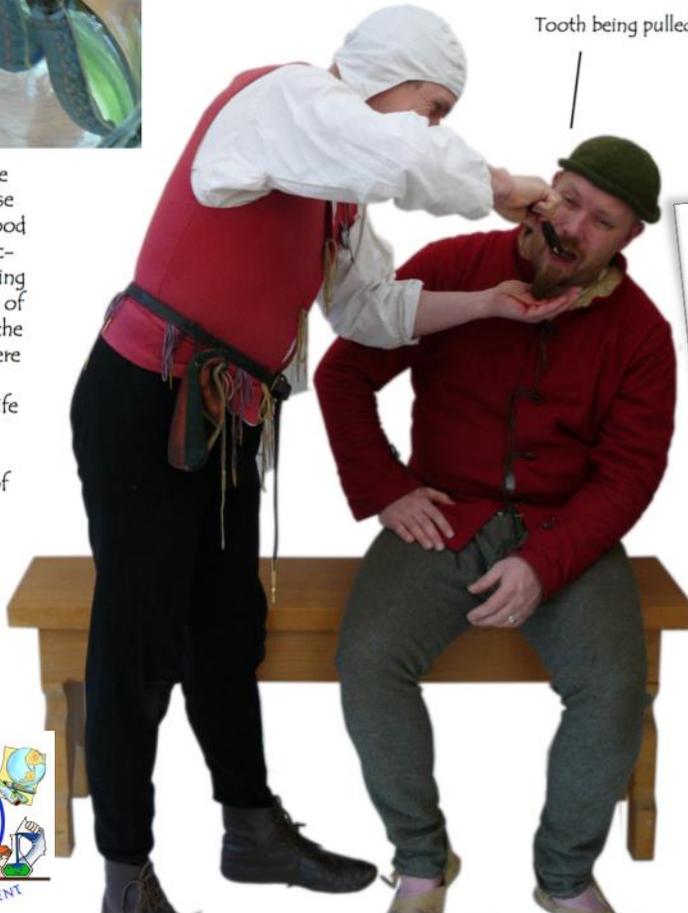


Arm being bled to dispel disease



Surgeons would use leeches such as these to suck the bad blood from patients. Doctors believed bleeding could cure all sorts of diseases including the plague. Leeches were a better alternative to the bleeding knife and bowl. Patients would be bled to the point of fainting.

Tooth being pulled



WARNING

Amputation video

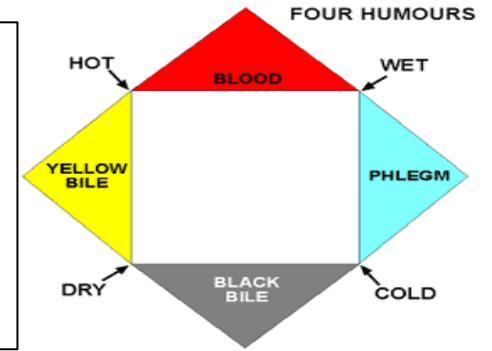
Renaissance

Bladder stone video

WARNING

Medieval Surgery

Don't forget! – They still believed in the Theory of the Four Humours.



FACT Hair cut or vein cut, Sir?

People sometimes visited a **barber-surgeon** to be bled. He was usually a bit cheaper than a doctor and you could have your hair cut at the same time (sharp knives you see!). A barber-surgeon shop was easy to spot because they had a red and white pole outside (red for blood, white for bandages. Some barbers still have poles like these outside their shops today.)



These surgeons did not go to University. They trained by watching other surgeons and reading books on surgery. They did basic surgery such as bleeding, removing surface tumours, sewing up wounds and splints for broken bones. They didn't have any anaesthetics and occasionally had to remove a limb or bladder stones.

Barber Surgeon Video

Medieval Physician

What are the key features of the Physician?

Physicians trained at universities for **SEVEN** years, reading books by Hippocrates, Galen and Arab writers like Rhazes and Ibn Sina.

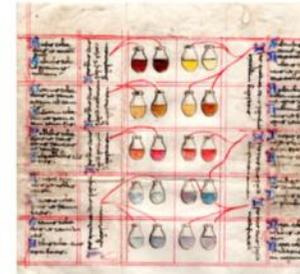
There were fewer than 100 physicians in England in 1300, and only the rich could afford their fees.

HH: Islam meds video

Astrology:

The alignment of the planets and stars was very important, looking at when the patient was born and fell ill to decide what was wrong with them! This became more popular after the Black Death (1348)

Astrology is a **SUPERNATURAL** explanation for disease.



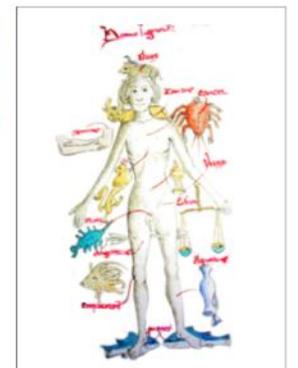
A 15th Century Urine Chart written in Latin. A doctor would use his chart to diagnose what was wrong with his patients.



Urine sample in Uroscopy Flask. A doctor would examine the colour, smell and even taste of the urine.

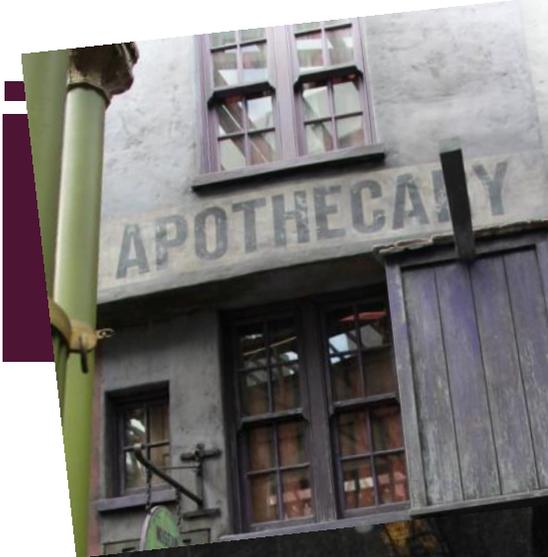
Typical Physicians robes with fur trim.

Medieval doctors studied astrology as a science. Below is a Zodiac man. It would tell the doctor which part of the body was associated with which star sign.



15th Century Physician

This physician is the great Dr. William Hobbes, physician to King Edward IV and his brother Richard III. In 1473 he is recorded as receiving 2 shillings wages a day (a good wage!).

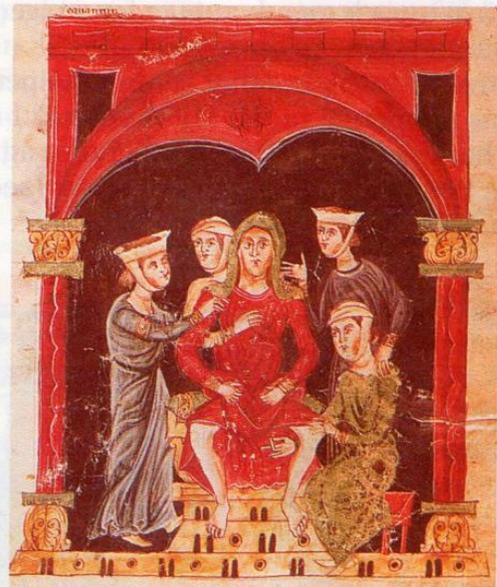


Apothecaries:



Apothecaries mixed ingredients to make ointments and medicines for the physicians. They learned from other apothecaries. They also made their own medicines to sell to the sick.

Women: wives, mothers and midwives



Women treated most illnesses and knew a wide range of remedies. Sometimes the local wise woman or lady of the manor was called to use her skills and knowledge.

Women acted as MIDWIVES. In some towns, midwives were apprenticed, had licences and were paid.

Women could qualify as surgeons by working as apprentices, but were not allowed to become physicians.

Women likely had many more healing skills than just mixing herbal remedies and keeping the patient clean, warm and well-fed. There is some suggestion that they carried out minor surgeries and bleedings – however, records are very patchy. This might be because it was taken for granted that women cared for the sick, so nobody bothered to record it when it happened.

SOURCE 6 Midwives attending a birth. Doctors did not get involved in childbirth in the Middle Ages. By the 1400s midwives in France and Germany had to gain licences, follow apprenticeships and had to keep to rules of behaviour

Could women become doctors in the Middle Ages?

Women were not allowed to go to universities, so although women still carried out much of the everyday medical care in towns and villages they could not train to become physicians. The effect was to devalue the skills of women healers. The Church which oversaw the training of doctors was particularly suspicious of the WISE WOMEN in villages. However, women continued to act as midwives, and they could still become surgeons.



Medieval Hospitals

The first wave of hospitals appeared in the towns during the 11th Century.

30% of them were owned and run by the Church and were run by monks and nuns who provided food, warmth and prayers for mostly older people who couldn't look after themselves any more.

Religion played a major role:

Everyone could see the altar where priests said mass 7 times a day. They rarely admitted the sick in case they spread infection. One of the most famous hospitals was St Bartholomew's in London 1123.

13th Century: Smaller hospitals were set up by organisations of wealthy townspeople (*guilds*), they looked after the locals who couldn't look after themselves. By 1500, there were 1100 hospitals ranging from a few beds to hundreds. In London, the Lord Mayor paid for an 8 bed hospital for unmarried pregnant women, in Chester, one for poor and silly persons.

HOSPITALS – ‘CARE NOT CURE’



Insane and pregnant patients were often rejected, though some hospitals had special beds reserved for unmarried mothers.

Patients would share beds.

Usually staffed by monks and nuns. The nuns would do the routine nursing, while the priests and monks saw to the spiritual welfare of the patients.

Focus was placed on caring for the sick, rather than curing disease. The Church believed that diseases had been sent by God as a punishment for sin, so only prayers could cure it.

Bury St Edmund's, for example, had at least six hospitals to cater for lepers, the infirm and the old. The city had a shrine famous for its healing powers and therefore attracted a lot of sick people.

Medieval hospitals that did treat the sick were not the same as the hospitals we have today.

Medieval hospitals were good places to rest and recover. The space would have been kept very clean and the bed linens and clothing of the patients changed regularly. It was a large part of the nuns' duties to do the washing and make sure everywhere was kept clean. This meant that, for people not suffering from terminal disease, hospitals were probably quite successful.

Naturally, this is what the Church wanted: a recovery was further proof of the existence of God and the importance of prayer.

Medieval Guilds played an important role in Medieval towns as guilds attempted to guarantee standards amongst crafts in Medieval England.

A group of skilled craftsmen in the same trade might form themselves into a **guild**. A guild would make sure that anything made by a guild member was up to standard and was sold for a fair price.

Membership of a guild was an honour as it was a sign that you were a skilled worker who had some respect in society.

Some members of a guild were chosen to check that other members of the guild were working up to standard. Those guild members who were found to be cheating the public would be fined or made to do work again but at their own cost. The worst punishment was to be expelled from your guild as it meant that you could no longer trade in your town. A guild would look after you – as a member of it – if you were sick. It would help the families of dead guild members.

Apprentices to a guild could be as young as twelve years old. They were taught a trade by a guild member. He would expect to be paid for this by the parents of the boy. An apprentice could live with his master for anything up to 14 years. The guild member had made a promise to teach the boy well and this could take time. Apprentices were not expected to get married during their apprenticeship. Going to the inn was usually banned as well.

Once an apprenticeship was over, the young person now became a journeyman. He would be paid a wage and once he had saved enough money, he could start up a business of his own.

Only members of a guild could sell within a town. This was meant to keep up quality. However, on market days anybody could sell their goods in the market whether they were skilled or not. An annual fair would attract people from far and wide.....including those a town or city would not want.

HOSPITALS CONTINUED

Many European hospitals employed physicians and surgeons, but there is no evidence to suggest that English hospitals did the same. Since religious men were forbidden from cutting into the body, treatment was very limited.

Infectious or terminal patients were often rejected from hospitals, as prayer and penance* could do nothing for these people. However, patients who had a chance of recovery were able to see the altar and even participate in Church services from their beds, to help with the healing of their souls.

Key term

Penance*

A punishment inflicted on yourself to show that are sorry for your sins.

The home

Although many hospitals were established in medieval England, the vast majority of sick people were cared for at home. It was expected that women would care for their relatives and dependents when needed. This care would have involved making the patient comfortable, preparing restorative foods and mixing herbal remedies.

Women would also be responsible for the garden, in which they were expected to grow various plants known for their healing properties, such as marigolds and clover.

Some historical sources hint that women in the home were well-respected for their healing skills. Letters written in 1464 between Lady Margaret Paston and her husband Sir John, when he was sick in London and she was at home worrying about him, show that neither of them trusted doctors and both would have been happier if he had been at home receiving treatment from her (see Source E).

Source D

A picture of a medieval hospital, from 1482. Some of the patients are sharing beds, which was normal at this time. The only patient allowed their own bed was a dying woman. Henry VII's famous hospital, the Savoy, opened in 1512. It was unique in offering all patients their own beds.

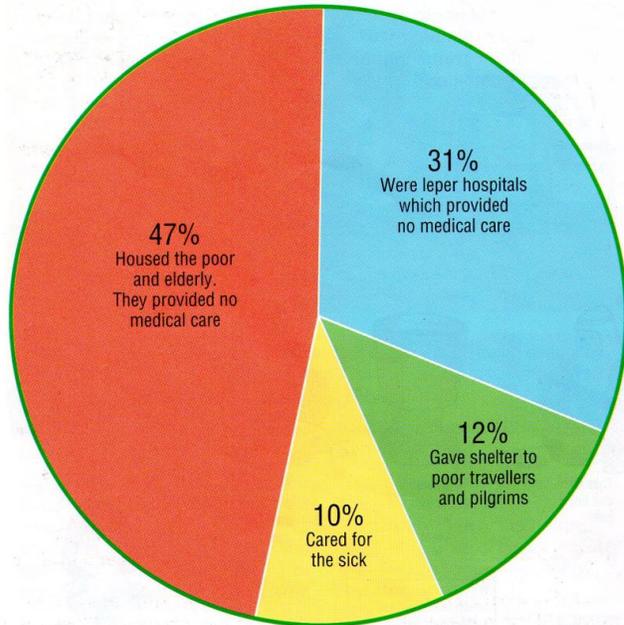


Source E

An extract from a letter sent from Margaret Paston to her husband, John Paston, in 1464. The Pastons were wealthy landowners living in Norfolk. At the time that this letter was written, John Paston was staying in London.

For God's sake beware of any medicine that you get from any physicians in London. I shall never trust them because of what happened to your father and my uncle, whose souls God forgive.

Interesting...



I. From the rules of the hospital of St. John

“No Lepers, lunatics, or persons having the falling sickness or other contagious disease, and no pregnant women, or suckling infants, and no intolerable persons, even though they be poor and infirm are to be admitted in the house and if any such be admitted by mistake, they are to be expelled as soon as possible. And when the other poor and infirm persons have recovered they are to be let out without delay”

2. From the rules of the hospital of St. John

“We strictly ordain ... that sick and weak people should be admitted kindly and mercifully, except for pregnant women, lepers, the wounded, cripples and the insane.”

What can you infer from these sources about TREATMENT, PREVENTION or ATTITUDES



Source B

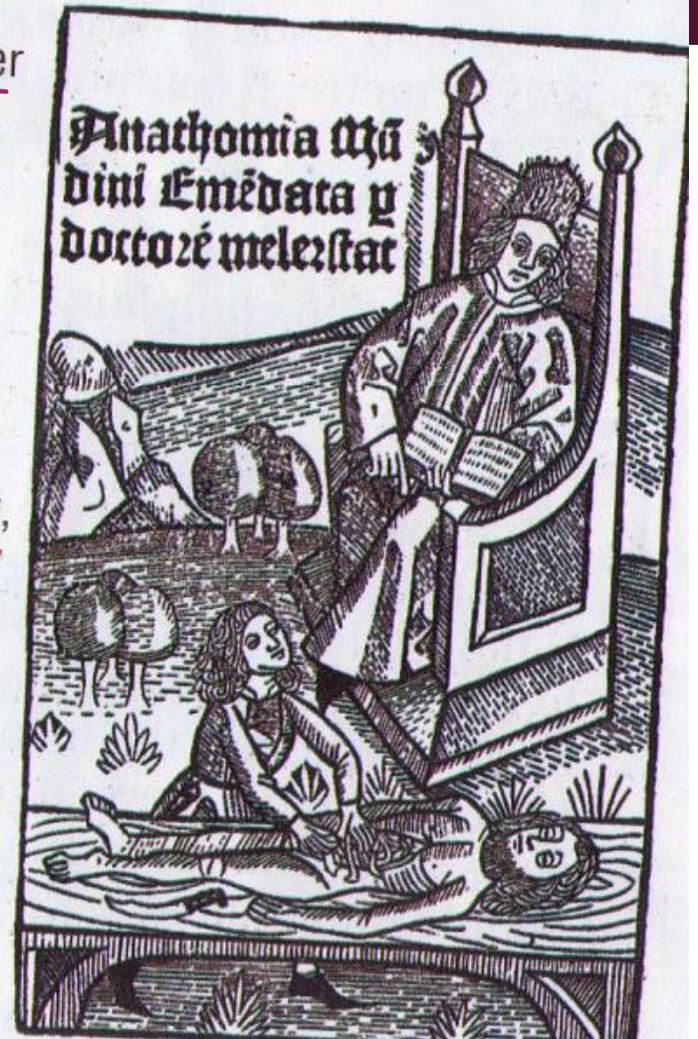
A painting of a leper from around 1400. Lepers were made to wear a cloak to cover their diseased bodies and ring a bell to warn people when they were nearby. The bell would also have acted as a way to ask for alms, or charitable donations. The words say, 'Some good, my gentle master, for God's sake.'

The church often explain famine by saying God sent it as a punishment, so it was logical to blame a person's sin for their illness. When they recovered, the church declared it a miracle thanks to the patients prayers. Remember, people believed God controlled the world.

Important to know
Teaching universities set up
in Montpellier.

Why might this be a problem
for progress?

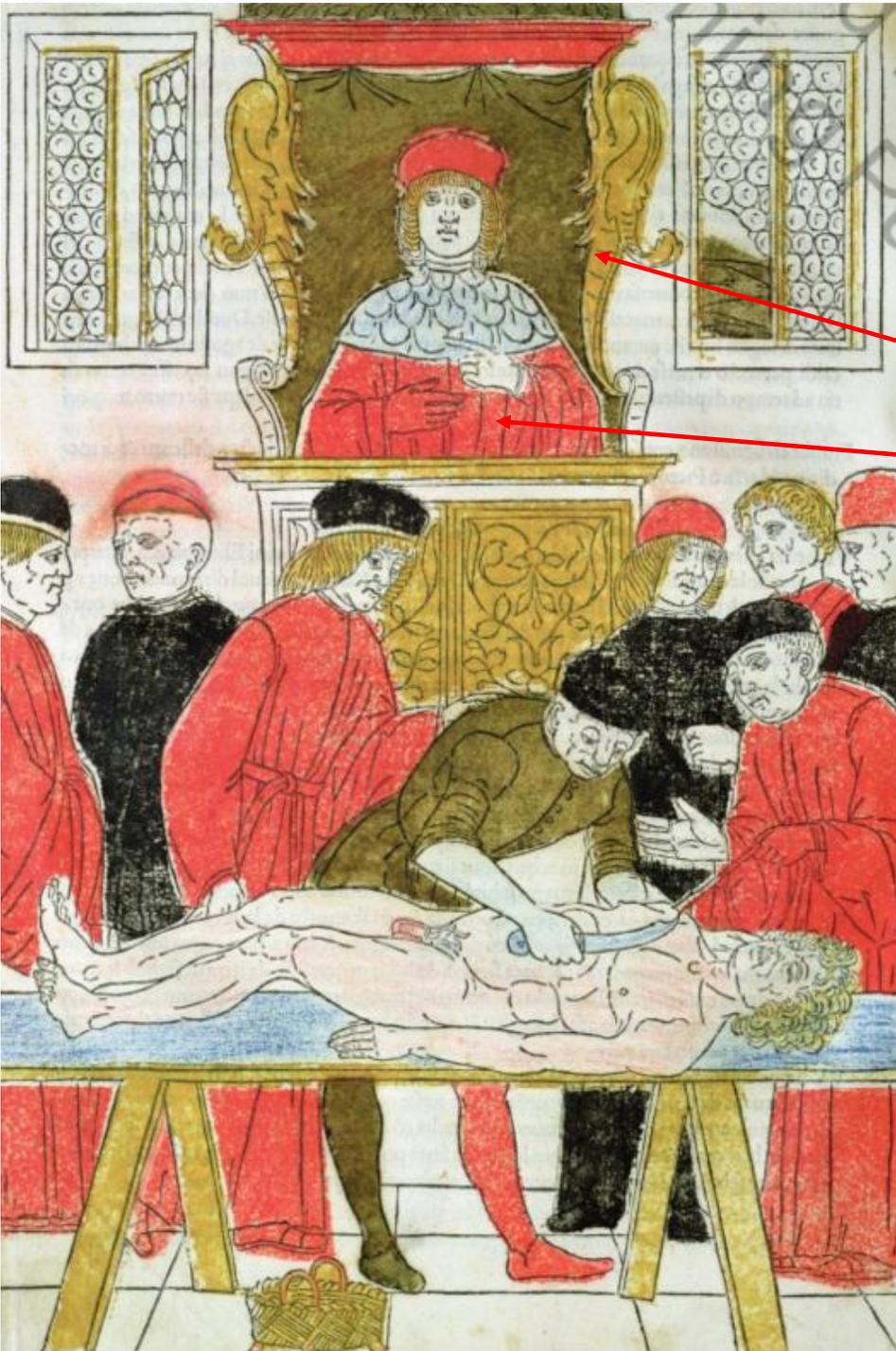
SOURCE 1 A teacher presiding over dissection at a medical school. The oldest medical school in Europe was founded at Salerno around 900. By the 1200s Montpellier in France was the most famous but there were a number of others. At these schools students listened to lectures where the teacher read out passages from the work of Galen and other ancient writers. At Montpellier, after 1340, the students were allowed to use one corpse a year for dissection, but the dissection was done by the teacher's assistant, not by the student



Published 1491

What can you see going on here?

Write down as many observations as you can



Lead Physician of the university

A book (who's works maybe?)

A medical dissection

Physician sitting higher up from the body
(Reading from Galen)

Body being dissected by an assistant / barber surgeon

Other students / physicians watching and listening (but not taking part)

"The work is hard. Quite often, day must become night and night day, so the sick can be cleaned, washed, put to bed, bathed, dried, fed, given drinks, carried from one bed to another, lifted so beds can be remade, personal linen washed out every day in clean water. Every week, between eight and nine hundred sheets can be rinsed in clean water, put into the wash tub, and washed in the river Seine, whether it's freezing, windy or raining, and then hung out to dry in the summer or dried by a great fire in the winter."



Stick your picture in the middle of your page and write around it as much information as you can of what you can see happening.

MEDIEVAL MEDICS SUMMARY



Physician –

- Trained but expensive
- Would only diagnose and recommend a course of treatment
- Would sample your urine, faeces & blood
- Consult astrology charts
- Rarely carried out treatment – forbidden from bleeding as most were clergymen



Women –

- Female family members
- Mixed herbal remedies and cared for sick
- Midwives

Activities



- 1** Draw a cartoon stick figure to represent each different medical professional. Add labels to explain what sort of treatments each person carried out.
- 2** Explain how each of the different professionals was trained to do their job.
- 3** Why do you think there was so much friction between the different types of medics in medieval England?

MEDIEVAL MEDICS SUMMARY



Barber Surgeon –

- Least qualified
- Good barbers had sharp knives & a steady hand, could also perform small surgeries – eg. teeth, tumours, bleeding
- Some surgeons were highly trained
- Experience made some of them better than physicians



Apothecaries –

- Mainly mixed herbs
- Studied herbal manuals / books
- Passed down knowledge from family
- An alternative to expensive physicians, thus a threat to physicians and no formal training needed
- Physicians took the Hippocratic oath (to do no harm), whereas apothecaries didn't, so could sell poison, provide charms and dabble in the supernatural – upset the Church



Christian Medicine

The theory of the four humours was used by most of the better doctors

The church set up some hospitals to treat the sick
Not all of them had doctors or surgeons, they were mostly for care of the sick

Doctors examined urine charts and star charts to diagnose a patient

These were kept in a book called a Vademecum, a medical pocket reference

Medieval medical students had very few opportunities to see and learn from dissections



The church was very important, religious belief affected medical progress

The church encouraged people to be more interested in their soul, and the afterlife than in the body and the world they lived in

People believed illnesses could be punishments from God for doing bad things.

People fasted, prayed, went on visits to holy places (Pilgrimages) or sometimes even punished themselves to repent and get God's pity

People were superstitious, Magic and astrology were used to try cure illnesses

SUMMARY

Summary

- Religious treatments included prayer, fasting and pilgrimages.
- Supernatural treatments included saying spells or carrying amulets, although these were discouraged by the Church.
- There were a large number of treatments aimed at rebalancing the humours. This was normally done by eating a particular food, taking herbal remedies or by purging the body to remove bad humours, either by making the patient vomit or go to the toilet.
- Because there were no guaranteed treatments, medieval people were advised to avoid getting ill by living a healthy lifestyle and keeping clean.
- Physicians, apothecaries and barber surgeons all provided different treatments.
- Hospitals followed religious teachings. Patients were cared for and prayers were said, but they rarely received any medical treatment. However, most sick people were cared for in the home by a female family member.

Checkpoint

Strengthen

- S1 What were the three different types of blood-letting?
- S2 List the different ways people tried to prevent disease in medieval England.
- S3 List the different sources of help sick people had in medieval England.

Challenge

- C1 You need to show links between the treatments and remedies used in the Middle Ages, and the ideas people had about what caused disease. With this in mind, create a revision resource, matching what you learned about the causes of disease with what you have learned about treatments. This could take the form of a table, a poster or a 'pairs' game to play when you are revising.
- C2 Add to your revision resource about treatments, linking the different sources of treatment to different beliefs about disease.
- C3 Identify which different sources of treatment were available to different groups of people (for example: the rich, the poor, pregnant women, lepers).

If you do not feel confident answering any of these questions, discuss them with a partner or in a group.



Medieval Britain Summary

Who will you go to?

This poor person is feeling very ill. What choices does she have for treatment?

The trained physician

- has had training at medical school and passed exams
- will diagnose you using your urine and astrological information
- administers treatment based on Galen: likely to be bloodletting, purging to balance your humours or herbal medicine
- consults astrology to determine the best approach to treatment
- can be expensive – you pay for each visit, but he has medical knowledge and believes his treatment to be superior to that of apothecaries and barber-surgeons
- doesn't mix medicines – you get them from the apothecary
- might not let blood himself – will direct you to the barber-surgeon
- will be male – women physicians were incredibly rare in this period.

The apothecary

- is trained but has no medical qualifications
- mixes various ingredients to produce medicines or ointments for the physician
- may also make you up their own mixture for a price
- is cheaper than having to consult a physician and then pay an apothecary for the same medicine anyway
- is probably male.

The barber-surgeon

- practises lots of bloodletting; can also pull out rotten teeth and lance boils
- can even have a go at some basic surgery, such as cutting out bladder stones or amputating limbs
- uses no anaesthetics, and has a very low success rate for surgery
- is not trained and is not respected by trained physicians
- can also cut your hair.

Hospital

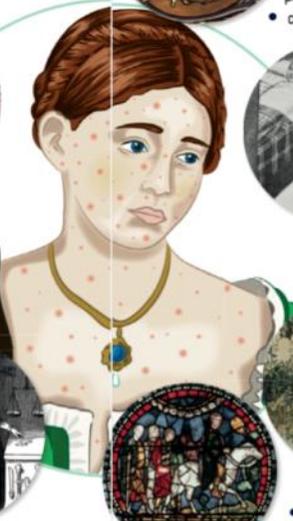
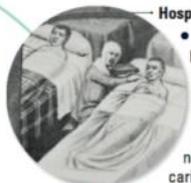
- was nothing like a modern hospital; was usually for the old or for specific illnesses, such as leprosy – sick people were looked after at home
- was run by monks and nuns: Christianity values caring for others
- after the Reformation in the 16th century some free hospitals were set up in towns, funded by charity.

Housewife-physician

- knew traditional remedies for things such as sore throats, stomach aches or a temperature
- would also be able to deal with broken bones and with childbirth – may have had a reputation as a local 'wise woman'
- used some remedies based on herbs and other plants, and others based on charms and spells
- could be the lady of the manor, who would treat her servants or families living on manor land.

Prayer and pilgrimage

- Many people would also go on pilgrimage to a holy shrine in the hope that they could be cured of an illness.



HOMEWORK: DUE -

Exam-style question, Section B

'Hospital treatment in England in the period from 1250 to 1500 was very rare'.

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following information in your answer:

- charity hospitals
- care in the home.

You **must** also use information of your own. **20 marks**

Exam tip

This question gives an extra four marks for good spelling, grammar and punctuation, and the use of specialist terms. Take extra care over things like capital letters for key words.