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GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME TASKS

Why were medical quacks successful?

A 'quack' doctor was someone who made a living selling their own medicines and cures, usually in the street or at fairs. They had been around since ancient times, but flourished in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

They were expert at winding up a crowd so that they all wanted to buy the cures.

TASK 1

Use Source A.

Write captions about some of the things to be seen in this picture. (For example, about the monkey: 'Quacks used monkeys to attract a crowd'.)

The clown:

Dr Bossey himself:

His medicine:

A high platform:

Members of the public:

GCSE HISTORY

MEDICINE THROUGH TIME

TASKS

Why were medical quacks successful?

TASK 2

Look at Source B.

What is Sequah saying to persuade the crowd to buy his 'American West' medicines? Write your speech in the bubble.



TASK 2

Look at Sources B and C.

Below is a table of factors. Some explain why quack doctors were so popular and successful for so long, some explain why they declined rapidly in the 20th century. Which belong in which column?

	Tick Box	
	Factors contributing to success of quacks	Factors contributing to decline of quacks
Ordinary people could not afford proper doctors		
Lots of people were ill		
Discovery of microbes causing specific illnesses and diseases		
Some quack medicines sometimes did some good		
Proper chemical analysis of quack medicines showed that there was nothing useful in them		
Some people got better just by taking a medicine – any medicine (this is called the placebo effect)		
Governments made proper medicines available cheaply		
Government laws controlled the ingredients in items sold to the public		
Medicines from proper, trained doctors were not much use		
The real causes of illness were not known or understood		

WELLCOME LIBRARY LEARNING RESOURCE

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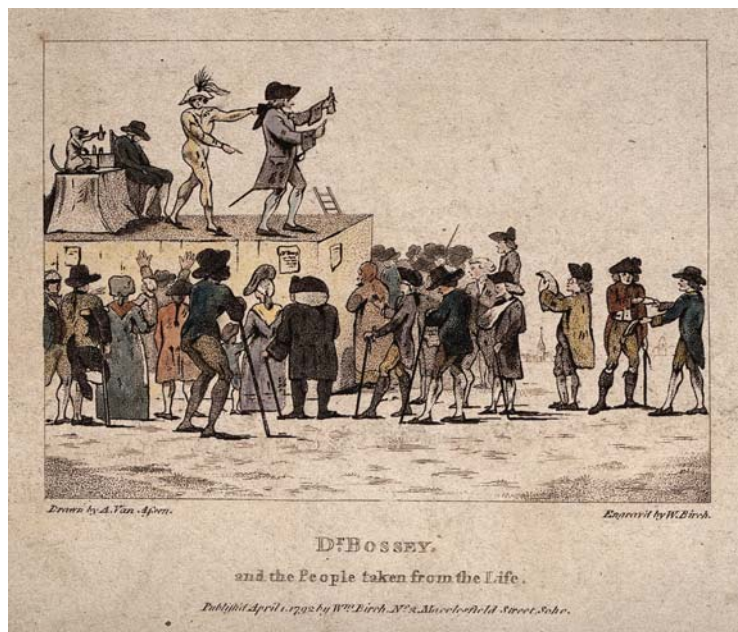


GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME SOURCE MATERIALS 1 OF 2

Why were medical quacks successful?

Source A.

Doctor Bossey selling his medicines in London in 1792. V0016170



Source B.

Sequah extracting a tooth at a gathering on Clapham Common, London, 1892. V0017583



GCSE HISTORY

MEDICINE THROUGH TIME

SOURCE MATERIALS 2 OF 2

Why were medical quacks successful?

Source C.

Sequah's Prairie Flower Medicine. Sequah was a 19th-century quack who claimed to be a native American from the Great Plains. In fact he was a Yorkshireman named William Harding. There was a craze for the American West at that time and Sequah was very popular. He carried out medical cures and sold his own medicines, supposedly based on native American ingredients. L0000389

