

# WELLCOME LIBRARY LEARNING RESOURCE



## GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME TASKS

### What can the history of herbal cures tell us about the history of medicine?

People have used plants to treat all kinds of medical problems. The leaves, roots and fruits of plants have all been used, either swallowed or applied as dressings. This is called 'herbal medicine' and has been used throughout history, from prehistoric times right up to the present day.

#### TASK 1

- What do you think about using plants, herbs and natural ingredients to make medicines? Talk about your thoughts to others in your group.
- Look at Sources A–D. Can you use these four documents to support your views? Start by ticking one of the four statements below to make the sentence you most agree with:

##### Herbal cures...

Tick box

- ...were nonsense.
- ...were only used because there was no alternative.
- ...were popular because people believed in them.
- ...really worked.

- What evidence can you use from one or more of Sources A–D to support your argument?

#### TASK 2

- Look at Sources A and D. They were made 1000 years apart. Which herbal ingredient is in both? Does this mean that there has been no progress in herbal medicines in between?
- Look at Source B. Dragon's blood doesn't exist. Bezoar had been proved to have no useful powers back in the 1540s. Yet Lady Ann Fanshawe wrote: "I have found good experimentally of this medicine." How do you explain this?
- Look at Source C. What theory about the causes of illness is shown in the last item?
- Why do you think Lady Ann Fanshawe and the person who wrote Source C collected these herbal medicines?
- Why don't people do this today? What has changed?

# GCSE HISTORY

## MEDICINE THROUGH TIME

### TASKS

## What can the history of herbal cures tell us about the history of medicine?

### TASK 3

Sources can be used to provide evidence to support different ideas. How could you use evidence from these sources to support each of these statements:

These sources show that people needed practical cures that they could make themselves	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
These sources show that people still believed in magic	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
These sources show that continuity is as important as change	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
These sources show the importance of women in medicine	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
These sources show the importance of writing	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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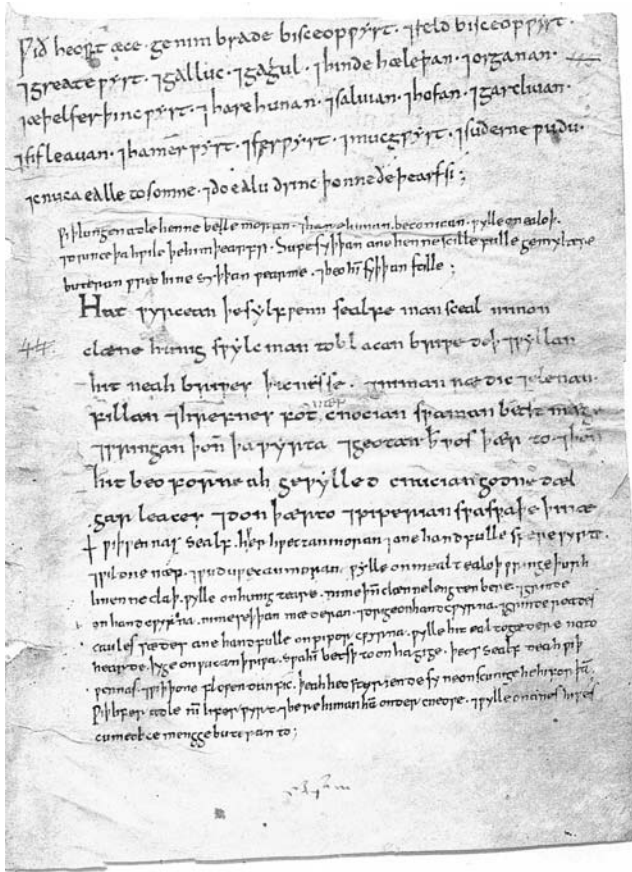
## GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME SOURCE MATERIALS 1 OF 2

### What can the history of herbal cures tell us about the history of medicine?

#### Source A.

An Anglo-Saxon recipe to cure lung disease from the 11th century. L0002718

“For lung disease, henbane, mulberry, horehound, betony; boil into an ale and drink at times as he has need. Let him take afterwards an eggshell-full of butter; then cover him up warm and let him rest.”



#### Source B.

A recipe from Lady Ann Fanshawe's recipe book, which was written in the 1670s. L0030016

“The red powder good for miscarrying.

Take: of Dragon's blood one dram<sup>1</sup>, powder of red coral one dram, ambergris the weight of 9 barleycorns; bezoar stone<sup>2</sup> the weight of 2 barleycorns. Make all these into a powder and in a little heated claret wine, give as much of this powder as will lie upon a penny at morning and night, first and last 3 or 4 times will serve. Make some broth with plantains, rootes and shepherd's purse and knotted grass, burnett and briar<sup>3</sup> leaves and drink this at pleasure. Put into the broth just as you drink it the [...] of 9 eggs.

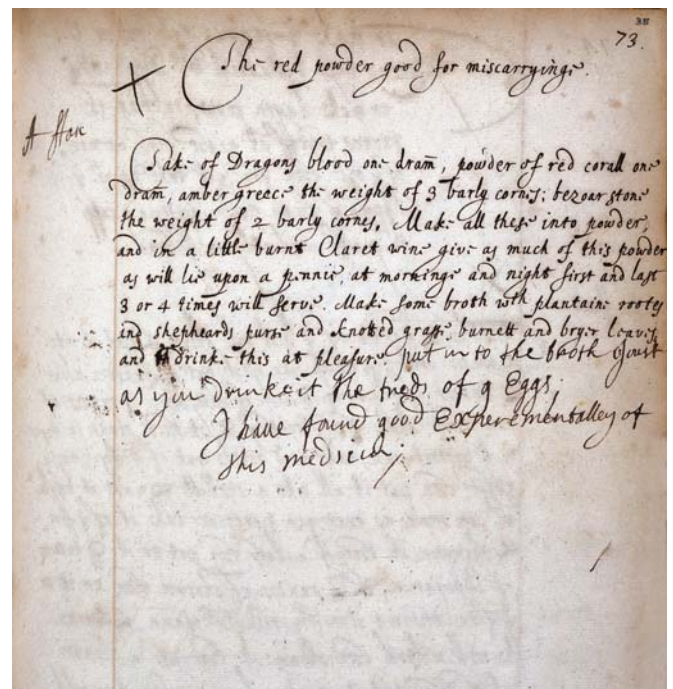
I have found good experimentally of this medicine”

<sup>1</sup>a drop.

<sup>2</sup>a stone from the stomach of a certain kind of goat.

<sup>3</sup>Shepherd's purse, knotted grass, burnett, briar are all wild plants.

(WMS 7113, folio 35 recto)



# GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME SOURCE MATERIALS 2 OF 2

## What can the history of herbal cures tell us about the history of medicine?

### Source C.

Some recipes from an 18th-century recipe book.  
L0037349

#### warts to remove

take juice of sengreen and purslain each half an ounce add 12 drops of oyl of tartar wash the warts with it hot and they wil fall away

#### to kil black headed worms in hands or face

take a gill of wormwood water ashes of southrenwood [sic] 1 ounce black soap half an ounce boyl it til it be thick you add 1 ounce of sweet comon oyl boyl slow to an ointment

#### to cause the hair to curl

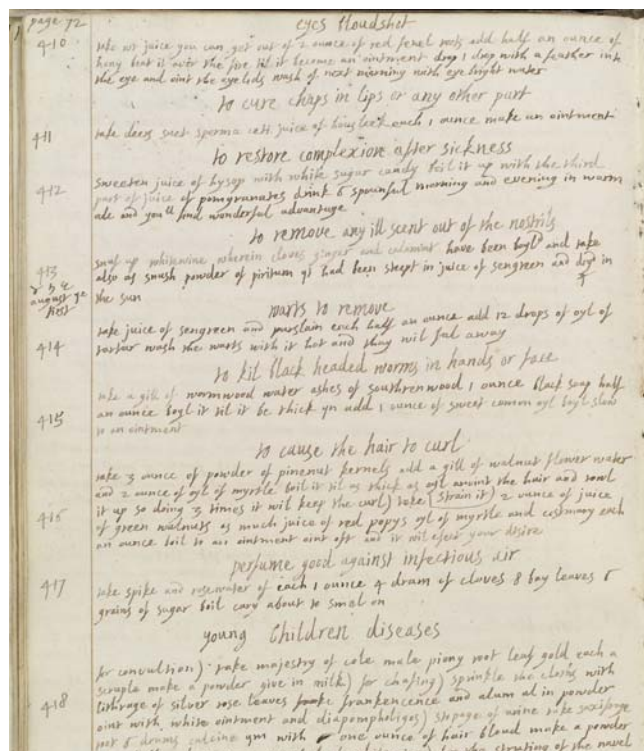
take 3 ounce of powder of pinenut kernels add a gill of walnut flower water and 2 ounce of oyl of myrtle boil it til as thick as oyl strain it anoint the hair and rowl it up so doing 3 times it wil keep the curl/ take 2 ounce of juice of green walnuts as much juice of red popys oyl of myrtle and [?cost]mary each an ounce boil to an ointment oint oft and it wil effect your desire

#### perfume good against infectious air

take spike and rosewater of each 1 ounce 4 dram of cloves 8 bay leaves 5 grain of sugar boil cary about to smel on

#### young children diseases

(Archives and Manuscripts MS.7102 folio 36v)



### Source D.

Modern photograph of henbane plant. The caption includes the information: "Extracts have been used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease and externally to relieve arthritis and toothache." L0020473

