

You will need:

- Doctor / patient role play cards
- A largish area to carry out the role play
- Costumes / props (optional)

Method:

1. Start by discussing what the group knows about how disease/illness can be caused and how they can spread. Do they think that people in the past thought the same? If not why not? This could lead into a brief outlining of common Medieval beliefs:
 - A punishment from God for sinful behaviour
 - Bad smells; though fresh air was also thought to be harmful!
 - Planets being out of line
 - An imbalance of the body's 'four humours' (blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile)
 - Treating symptoms with similar looking cures e.g. if someone had a red rash they might be told to rub red poppies onto the rashPhysicians would develop their own cures based on what they believed in; i.e. those who followed the four humours theory believed in using bleeding, sweating and vomiting to restore the balance of the four humours.
2. Divide the group into two groups, those who will be doctors and those who will be patients' seeking a cure.
3. Hand out the cards and explain if they are doctors they will need to listen to the patients symptoms and, if these match the card they hold, they will need to diagnose what is wrong with the patient and give them a cure. If they are a patient they need to act out/reveal their symptoms to the group and see what the doctor suggests!
4. Once everyone has been diagnosed see if you can work out from the cures which form of belief the physicians consulted had. Do they think any of the cures would have worked?

Follow up work:

- Look into the different types of doctor that existed in the past:
 - Physicians
 - Barber surgeons
 - Monks/nuns
 - Wise women/herbalists
- Research the key developments and people in Greek and Roman medicine i.e. surgical techniques and equipment, Hippocrates, Galen etc
- Research Louis Pasteur and his germ theory
- Research John Snow and his work in London in 1854 looking at how cholera spreads
- Look at past medical practices in the arabic world and the words we still use today that originate from arabic medicinal terms e.g. drug, syrup, alcohol, alkali
- Look at how medical practice is represented in images from the past e.g. in Egyptian wall paintings; you will need to screen out anything too gruesome!
- Make a Medieval tussy mussy; these are bags of herbs used to protect against the plague visit www.yac-uk.org/leaders.html#Resources for a guide on how to make one

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Headache

Symptoms: A painful head

Cure: Cut open the veins at the back of the neck and bleed out two bowlfuls of blood.

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Gout

Symptoms: Painful swelling of the joints, especially the feet and toes

Cure: Cut a mouse in two and place it on the painful parts.

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Mouth ulcers or toothache

Symptoms: A painful mouth or teeth; there may be blisters in the mouth

Cure: Visit a barber surgeon and have the tooth pulled out or cut open the veins underneath the tongue and bleed out two bowlfuls of blood.

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Septic wounds

Symptoms: Cuts or sores that look yellow and swollen. They feel hot and may smell.

Cure: Place on leech on each wound. Allow the leech to suck out blood until it is five times bigger

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Baldness

Symptoms: Loosing the hair from your head

Cure: Crush some garlic and rub it onto your head, then wash your head with vinegar.

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Warts

Symptoms: Lumps that grow on the hands or face

Cure: Cut a mouse in half and put on the wart for half an hour. Bury the mouse and, as its body rots, your wart will disappear.

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Smallpox

Symptoms: A red rash and some boils on the skin

Cure: Keep red plants near you such as poppies

Doctor Card - listen to the patient's symptoms, can you tell them a cure?

Disease: Fever

Symptoms: Feeling hot and shivering

Cure: As soon as the moon has past through the middle of the sign of Gemini come back to be bled!

Patient Card - try to act out and explain the problem you are having!

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