

## Exemplar response 6

5 'There was little progress in medicine in Britain during the Renaissance period (c1500-c1700).'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You may use the following in your answer.

- the work of William Harvey
- bloodletting and purging

You must also use information of your own.

I agree with the statement that 'There was little progress in medicine in Britain in the Renaissance period' to a certain extent. This is because during the Renaissance period there were many medical breakthroughs which did create progress within the history of medicine. One of these medical breakthroughs was Harvey's discovery that the heart was a pump and that it circulated blood around the body. This shows there was medical progress as in the long term as Harvey's discoveries would inspire future doctors and lay the foundations for more medical progress in the future. For example his discovery created the stepping stones for future doctors to discover blood types which lead to the development of blood transfusions and heart surgeries.

A different reason why there was medical progress in the Renaissance period is shown in the work by Sydenham. His work as a physician added to medical progress at the time. This was because he used observation of patients and the use of records to diagnose illness and to find treatments such as laudanum for pain. This shows medical progress as he used his initiative and medical knowledge to create better and more effective treatments. Also his work with quinine gave future doctors the inspiration to use quinine to treat malaria which in the future would become a significant medical breakthrough.

However there were also many factors which showed lack of medical progress within the Renaissance period. For example the Church was still very dominant in the medical world. This shows lack of progress overall the Church was still supporting the ideas of Galen and the use of supernatural treatments such as self-punishment and lucky charms. Furthermore this shows lack of medical progress as most of the population chose to follow the Church which meant new medical ideas were being forgotten about and not used throughout the medieval community.

Another factor that shows little progress throughout the Renaissance period is that the work of Harvey and Vesalius was all theory which meant that there was no impact at the time of their discoveries. Overall this shows lack of medical progress as not only were their ideas frowned upon by the Church, but also most of the population was illiterate. This overall shows a lack of progress as many people couldn't read their theories, therefore decided to follow the Church's medical ideas.

In conclusion I believe that there wasn't much progress in medicine throughout the Renaissance period. This is because even though discoveries made by individuals lead to the discovery of blood groups and more accurate diagnosis in the future. During the Renaissance period the Church dominance of medicine and lack of practical work meant that there were no impacts at the time due to these discoveries, therefore there was little progress made throughout the Renaissance period.

**Examiner's commentary**

This response is an analytical explanation which is directed consistently at the focus of the question (Strand 1 – AO2) by showing arguments for and against progress having justified an overall judgement (Strand 3 – AO2). The content goes beyond the stimulus points with reference to other individuals and the Church (AO1) and is sufficient to meet low Level 4, but is not always sufficient to exemplify wide-ranging knowledge and understanding for an extended 16-mark response in the thematic study. The line of reasoning uses supporting information which refers to the future and which may seem to be less relevant but the conclusion defines these references as criteria for judgement (AO2) – clearly making this valid. The overall best fit would suggest Strand 1 low Level 4, Strand 2 low Level 4 and Strand 3 Level 4 – overall low Level 4.