Diagnosis of illness and disease

**Middle Ages 1250-1500**

In the Middle Ages Doctors followed the ideas of Hippocrates and Galen to diagnose illness. They believed if your humours were out of balance then you would become ill. Each humour matched to a season of the year-so depending on what time of year it was depended on which humour was out of balance. If it was spring and you were warm then you may need to be purged of blood.

Doctors also carried urine charts to aid diagnosis. Doctors would examine the colour, smell and taste to find out what was wrong with a patient.

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**Renaissance 1500-1700**

Thomas Sydenham trained doctors to carefully observe a patient and make notes about symptoms to help diagnose what was wrong with a patient.

By the Renaissance the new ‘Science’ of astrology was used to aid diagnosis. A Zodiac Man chart linked all 12 signs of the zodiac (star signs) to parts of the body. Doctors would determine what areas of your body were at fault for your illness depending on what star sign you were born in. For example, if you are a Gemini you may have problems with your lungs, brain or nervous system.

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**Industrial 1700-1900**

There was a lot of continuity between the Renaissance and the Industrial period regarding the diagnosis of illness and disease. Doctors had started to be trained to carefully observe patients during the scientific revolution during the Renaissance. Others built on the work of Thomas Sydenham so that symptoms were catalogued for illnesses and diseases. These were then communicated and printed in medical journals like The Lancet by people such as the Royal Society. This meant doctors recognised illnesses by noting symptoms of their patients.

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**Modern 1900-present day**

Diagnosis has rapidly improved with the onset of much improved science & technology. In 1895 Wilhelm Roentgen invented the X-Ray machine-over the following 30 years it was used extensively to diagnose patients. Computer developments has led to the use of high-tech scans, like MRI scans to aid diagnosis. Blood tests are also used to help diagnose what is wrong with a patient. These tests can detect serious illnesses, like cancers for example. Doctors of course still observe a patients symptoms very carefully to diagnose more straightforward illnesses.
Exam practise

- Explain one way in which the methods used by doctors to diagnose illness during the Renaissance were similar to the methods used during the modern period (4)

- Explain one way in which the methods used by doctors to diagnose illness during the Middle Ages (1250-1500) were different from the methods used during the modern period (1900-present) (4)