

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCE General Studies 6GS01 01

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Introduction

The format of the paper was as in previous examinations. Section A consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions on a variety of topics across the specification. Section B included questions related to source material on the supply and demand for organ transplants in the UK. Section C contained two essay questions, the first on the nature of scientific theories and the second essay on fear of crime. Candidates were required to answer all questions. Almost all candidates were able to attempt all questions, including both essay questions. This suggests that candidates are continuing to manage their time effectively in relation to the various demands of different question types. As in previous series, Quality of Written Communication (QWC) remains a concern. On this paper a possible 14 marks out of 90 can be awarded for QWC in Section B and Section C. Candidates should be aware that poor punctuation or grammar, particularly if it impedes understanding, can have a significant effect on the grade awarded.

Question 21

This question asked candidates to name 3 types of organ transplant other than kidney transplant which is already mentioned in the source material. Almost all candidates were able to give three correct answers. In the rare instances where full marks were not awarded it was most often because the body part mentioned was not an organ. The most common wrong answers were brain, eye and bone marrow.

21 Source 1 only gives specific information about kidney transplants. Name three types of organ transplant not mentioned in the source.

1 Liver transplant

2 Lung transplant

3 Skin transplant



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Examiner Comments

This answer was awarded full marks. Other common correct answers included heart, intestine and pancreas.

21 Source 1 only gives specific information about kidney transplants. Name three types of organ transplant not mentioned in the source.

1 Liver transplant

2 Heart transplant

3 Bone marrow transplant.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gained 2 marks for identifying liver and heart transplants. Although bone marrow transplants take place, bone marrow is not an organ and therefore does not gain a mark.

Question 22

This question asked candidates to identify three reasons why there was an increasing gap between supply and demand for transplant organs. Almost all candidates were able to identify three correct reasons from paragraph 1 of the source material.

22 From paragraph 1, identify three reasons why there is an increasing difference between the number of people awaiting transplants and the number of people receiving them.

1. greater demand for transplants due to increase in disease such as hepatitis C
2. Fewer people killed on roads so supply of suitable organs has decreased.
3. improved medical care has increase survival rates, less people to give be donors.



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Examiner Comments

This answer includes all three correct reasons and is awarded 3 marks.

Question 23

This question asked candidates to use their own knowledge to identify three reasons why demand for transplant organs is increasing. Many candidates were able to do this successfully, with the most common correct answers referring to an increasing population, more common organ failure in an ageing population and an increase in obesity levels. It was clear from some of the incorrect responses that a minority of candidates had misunderstood the question, because they either repeated the answers to Question 22, or gave other reasons why the supply of transplant organs might be decreasing rather than commenting on the demand for transplants.

23 Using your own knowledge, give three reasons why the demand for organ transplants is increasing.

- 1 The rate of drinking alcoholic drinks have increased, more people require liver transplants.
- 2 People have become more unhealthy, ~~obese~~ obese, More people ~~are~~ with heart problems.
- 3 Rates of Smoking have increased, more number of lung disease have increased as well due to this



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Examiner Comments

This answer gained 1 mark for referring to obesity linked to heart disease. No marks were awarded for answers relating to smoking and drinking because these have been in decline in recent years.

23 Using your own knowledge, give three reasons why the demand for organ transplants is increasing.

1. The increase of lifestyle diseases such as low level exercise and high salt intake diets mean people are more unhealthy.
2. Increase in older people living longer who require more health care such as organ transplants.
3. Increase in population so more people with the risk chance of needing an organ transplant.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gained all 3 marks.

Question 24

This question asked candidates to use information in the source material to calculate the percentage of patients waiting for a kidney transplant who did not receive an organ. Almost all candidates were able to select the data necessary to answer the question. Less than half of all candidates were able to calculate the correct answer. Some candidates calculated the correct fraction (0.72) but failed to convert this to a percentage. Some candidates calculated the percentage of patients who did receive a transplant (28%), rather than the percentage who did not receive a transplant (72%).

24 Use the information in paragraph 2 to calculate the percentage of the patients on the waiting list for a kidney transplant who did not receive a transplant organ.

1838 got ~~the~~ transplants out of 6592

$$\frac{1838}{6592} \times 100 = 27.88$$

~~28%~~
28% did not receive a transplant organ



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer gained 2 marks for selecting the correct data and a valid calculation of the percentage, but the calculation to find the percentage of patients who did not receive a transplant was not completed.

24 Use the information in paragraph 2 to calculate the percentage of the patients on the waiting list for a kidney transplant who did not receive a transplant organ.

6592 waiting

1838 done

$$100\% - 27.88\%$$

$$1838 \div 6592 = \text{Ans}$$

$$\text{Ans} \times 100 = 27.88\% \text{ done}$$

\neq 72.12%
did not receive a transplant organ

72.12%

(Total for Question 24 = 3 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer gained full marks.

Question 25

This question asked candidates to explain the meaning of "informed consent" and "presumed consent". Marks were awarded for answers which referred to "opt-in" or "opt-out". Marks were also given for answers which referred to written records of consent such as donor cards.

25 What is meant by 'presumed consent' and 'informed consent'?

Presumed consent

Where people are presumed to agree to being an organ donor and have to opt out if they don't

Informed consent

Where people have to opt in if they want to be an organ donor



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Examiner Comments

This answer mentions both opt-in and opt-out and gains 2 marks.

Question 26

This question asked candidates to explain why the practices relating to organ donation, described in the source material, had an ethical dimension. Candidates were able to gain up to 2 marks for identifying two different practices, with a further 3 marks available for discussing the ethical dimension. Most candidates were able to identify two practices, most commonly the use of GM animals and stem cells, and were able to explain at least one reason why there were ethical concerns. This was often related to religious belief, or to particular aspects of animal or human rights.

26 The source refers to scientific or medical practices which raise ethical issues.

Identify two of these practices and explain why they have an ethical dimension.

The first ethical issue raised was from the suggested practice of transplanting organs from genetically modified animals. Apart from the stigma of transplanting animal organs into humans as unclean, there would also be concerns about the welfare of the animal. For example, a genetically-modified pig would have to be around 30 stone in order to provide a heart large enough to be transplanted and efficiently work in a human. This would make the pig so heavy that it would have trouble moving and therefore reduce its quality of life. Similarly, in order to get the transplant organ, the animal would have to be killed; this seems highly controversial to breed thousands of animals purely for the intent of purpose of killing them.

Secondly, the use of stem cells is also highly controversial because the use of embryonic stem cells is often more successful than that of adult stem cells. This is because embryonic stem cells are totipotent and have the ability to become any cell, whereas adult stem cells (from bone marrow) are not. The ethical issue that is raised is that the stem cells are gathered by inserting a hollow needle into the womb and extracting cells from the placenta. This has a 1% chance of miscarrying a healthy foetus, and therefore killing a human being with the potential for life (depending when you think human life begins). Alternatively, stem cells could be taken from aborted foetuses who otherwise would be wasted but this is seen as highly controversial, especially to religious groups who see it as destroying a sacred human life. (includes 3 marks for Quality of Written Communication)



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Examiner Comments

This answer was awarded 5 marks for content and a further 3 marks for QWC.

26 The source refers to scientific or medical practices which raise ethical issues.

Identify two of these practices and explain why they have an ethical dimension.

Genetic modification on animals would have an ethical dimension especially to those who support animal rights as it is seen as unnatural to have animals with qualities they're not actually born with all for our own benefit.

Another would probably be testing new medicines or drugs on humans as the results could be potentially fatal or extremely dangerous, especially medicines that aren't 100% perfected with ~~no~~ guaranteed positive results.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gained 2 marks for identifying genetic modification of animals and then explaining that this was an ethical concern because it was linked to the notion of animal rights. The further comment on testing of new drugs on animals was not an issue mentioned in the source material and therefore gained no marks. A further 2 marks were awarded for QWC.

Question 27

This question asked candidates to assess the strength of the evidence and arguments presented in the source material. As well as a number of clearly identifiable facts and opinions, the source also contained an argument by analogy in the comparison between the organ donation systems in the UK and Spain. Candidates could gain marks by identifying this argument and commenting on its validity or strength. Additional marks were also available for candidates who were able to make valid comments about the relative strength of pieces of evidence. Many candidates gained few marks because their answers discussed the value of the different methods of gaining consent for organ donation mentioned in the passage, rather than discussing the strength of the evidence itself. Answers which gave no comment about the strength of the evidence also received limited QWC marks.

27 The author uses different types of evidence and arguments to support the conclusion that the problems with organ transplantation can be solved by adopting a legal system of 'presumed consent'.

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of these different types of evidence and arguments, using examples from the passage.

Firstly, the author uses analytic evidence in the form of "Spain's number of donors is almost 3 times the UK figure." This uses objective statistical evidence to show that Spain has almost 3x as many donors: this type of evidence is strong because the statistics provided are indisputable, they are not subjective and require human interpretation. As the premise is analytic and the conclusion that presumed consent is a simple solution seems rational it is hard to dispute either claim. However this argument has weaknesses through the manipulation of statistics. Whilst Spain may have 3x as many donors it does not take into account Spain's large population and so they may have a smaller proportion of donors relative to their population size. Another type of argument is a subjective rhetorical question posed in the final paragraph. This is a strong form of argument in that it forces the reader to question their own beliefs and it seems to be easier to agree with the apparently rational conclusion "why shouldn't it work here?" However this form of argument can also be seen as weak as it offers no empirical evidence that it "has done the trick elsewhere" and therefore offers no experience or analytic evidence on which to base this statement.



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Examiner Comments

This answer was awarded full marks for both content (5) and QWC (3).

27 The author uses different types of evidence and arguments to support the conclusion that the problems with organ transplantation can be solved by adopting a legal system of 'presumed consent'.

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of these different types of evidence and arguments, using examples from the passage.

The strengths of ~~presumed~~ making presumed consent legal would be:

- ① Less of the government's money would be spent on medical research ~~so~~ and therefore they would be able to spend money in other sectors as more organ donors would mean less need to find alternatives through medical research.
- ② There will be much more organs to be used, therefore also more people would be treated, and their survival rates would increase.
- ③ Ethical issues such as animal ^{organ} modification ~~is~~ would be greatly tackled as if there were more organs to go around there would be much less need to experiment ~~on~~ ^{on} animals.

The weaknesses of this argument are that:

- ① Not all people ~~are~~ have healthy organs, i.e. people with diseases such as hepatitis C and diabetes will not be ~~as~~ useful in terms of organs such as their hearts.
- ② Someone may die before being to get out and ~~is~~ cases such as someone ^{that is} ~~person~~ ^{organ donor} is a risk, this would cause great ethical disturbance.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gained only 1 mark for content because most of the answer was about transplants not the strength of the evidence. This mark was awarded for quoting evidence from the source. The answer was in the context of the passage and therefore a QWC mark was appropriate but was restricted to 1 mark because most of the answer did not address the question. The answer scored 2 marks overall.

Question 28

This question asked candidates to discuss arguments for and against the assertion that "The history of major scientific theories shows us that scientific knowledge is so uncertain as to be useless".

Almost all answers included some reference to the theories mentioned in the stem of the question, particularly the development of the Copernican model of the solar system. Answers which scored well tended to include other theories relating to astronomy or other areas of science such as evolution. The best answers were able to offer other examples of the development of scientific theories which had led to greater understanding of natural phenomena. Many limited answers gave a view of science and scientific theories as irrelevant to everyday life, and tended to associate lack of certainty with lack of knowledge. Answers which scored more highly recognised that linking certainty to knowledge impedes progress, and were able to demonstrate the continuing success of science through the technological applications of scientific theories. The answers which scored most highly were often able to link the nature of scientific knowledge to the scientific method and were able to compare and contrast this with other areas of knowledge.

Question 29

This question asked candidates to consider whether "...reducing fear of crime is as important as reducing levels of crime".

Some candidates who achieved low marks were unable to go beyond accepting the description of fear of crime in the stem of the question and offering a simple commentary. Many of these candidates also did not accept that crime levels were falling, but made comments in support of the stereotypical tabloid view of prison as a soft option and sentences as much too lenient. Such answers often concluded that the best way to reduce fear of crime was to reduce levels of crime, despite the evidence to the contrary. Some candidates recognised the apparent contradiction between consistently falling levels of crime, while fear of crime appears to be increasing. Answers which scored highly linked this to a number of possible reasons, including the portrayal of crime in the tabloid press and elsewhere, as well as perceptions about who the victims of crime are.

Paper Summary

Candidates for future examination series of this paper are offered the following advice:

- When answering multiple-choice questions, you should read all four answers before choosing the one you think is correct. If you are not sure then try to eliminate the answers which you think are definitely wrong and then choose between the remaining answers. Answer all 20 multiple-choice questions even if you have to guess.
- The suggestions in the paper about how much time to spend on each section reflect the marks available in each section. Section C contributes 40 out of the 90 marks for the whole paper, so try to spend about 20 minutes on each essay.
- In sections B and C, 14 of the available 70 marks are for Quality of Written Communication. You can lose a significant number of marks for poor spelling, grammar or punctuation, especially if it makes it more difficult for the examiner to understand what you have written.
- When asked to select evidence from source material, you will not get any marks for quoting evidence which is not in the source or for giving your own opinion, even if the evidence is relevant.
- If asked to give 3 answers, do not give a list which contains more than 3 answers, because any incorrect answer will mean a mark is deducted.
- If you are asked to assess the strength of evidence in a source, you can gain good marks by quoting and identifying evidence as fact or opinion. You can also get marks for identifying and commenting on informal argument types, such as argument by analogy or argument from authority.

Grade Boundaries

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