



General Certificate of Education

**Health and Social Care
8621/8623**

HC06 Common Diseases and Disorders

Report on the Examination

January 2010

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HC06: Common Diseases and Disorders

Candidates produced a good range of responses to the questions on this paper and there were significant numbers who gained high marks. Able candidates demonstrated good use of technical terminology and produced well reasoned answers. Less able candidates tended to produce less detailed responses which lacked accuracy. The use of technical language by these candidates was far less secure.

Question 1

Most candidates gained well in part (a), showing their good understanding of the causes and symptoms of influenza and thrush. Some weaker candidates failed to gain the mark available in part (a)(iii) by suggesting that thrush is caused by a bacterium. Part (b) proved more challenging with a significant number of weaker candidates explaining how age may make Helen more vulnerable to infection rather than suggesting another factor. Part (c)(i) was well answered however, with the majority able to gain at least two of the three marks available for the different ways disease-causing organisms can enter the body. Part (c)(ii) produced mainly appropriate responses on preventative strategies.

Question 2

In part (a)(i) most candidates were able to gain at least three or four of the marks available on this data question. Weaker candidates tended to restrict their answers to straightforward comparisons between the number of reported cases of allergic symptoms caused by the different allergens and/or reported cases in 2006 and 2007, e.g. more or less comparisons or most and least responses. More able candidates often produced answers commenting on similarities as well as differences and/or the significance of the size of the differences in their comparisons. Part (a)(ii) produced many sound answers where candidates clearly understood the mechanism by which food allergens produce allergic symptoms. Weaker candidates often became confused in their responses, e.g. on the role of basophils, mast cells and antibodies. Part (b) was well answered with the vast majority able to give two common airborne allergens.

Question 3

Candidates' responses in part (a) were generally accurate but some weaker candidates confused the cause of myopia with hypermetropia. Responses on tinnitus in part (b) tended to score well, with the majority gaining at least two of the three marks available. In part (c)(i) most candidates gained at least one of the three marks available, but weaker candidates were sometimes restricted by their descriptions of the effects of flossing rather than outlining what is meant by flossing. Again in part (c)(ii), weaker candidates responses were often restricted by their interpretation of the question i.e. they produced explanations, of varying degrees of detail, explaining how dental caries is caused, but failed to link the reduction of the risk of dental caries to the flossing process

Question 4

In part (a)(i) the majority of candidates gained only one of the two marks available for localised rash and not recognising it also as macular. Very few suggested a raised rash for the mark in part (a)(ii), but more gained the mark for generalised rash. Some weaker candidates confused localised and generalised rashes in parts (a)(i) and (a)(ii). As on previous papers, a significant number of candidates were confused in their understanding of how headaches cause pain and as such were restricted to one or two marks in part (b)(i). Part (b)(ii) however, was well answered with many candidates gaining full marks for three common causes of headaches. Part (c)(i) proved to be more challenging with some candidates confusing infective with non-infective causes. Part (c)(ii) was well known and most candidates were able to gain the two

marks for the symptoms of food poisoning, but many were restricted to only one of the two marks in part (c)(iii) , usually by referring to the time taken for digestion to occur and the microbe to enter the body. More able candidates gained the two marks for explaining microbial multiplication over time. Some (weaker) candidates produced responses which were confused with allergic reactions caused by foods.

Grade boundaries

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