



# The Royal College of Pathologists

## Examples of Short Answer Questions

1. Ahmed is a 25 year old student who has come to the United Kingdom from the middle east to study engineering. Before arriving here three weeks ago he had visited his family in a rural area for a week for a farewell meal. He presented with a temperature of 38.5°C and complains that for the last few days has been soaking the sheets of his bed with sweat. On further questioning he reveals that he has periods between fevers when he feels quite well. The patient complains of testicular pain and on clinical examination you find evidence scrotal tenderness. There is no significant past medical history. Two days after admission a Gram negative cocco-bacillus is isolated from blood culture.

- a. What is the most likely pathogen?
- b. How should it be identified?
- c. What additional investigations would be helpful?
- d. What treatment would you recommend?

2. A GP contacts you about admitting a male patient he has been treating for pneumonia with little improvement on first line oral antibiotics. The patient is 34 yrs old and is from Zimbabwe – he has been in the UK for 2 months, and his wife and 2 children are well. He has been having intermittent fever, a dry cough and shortness of breath on exertion for about 3 weeks. FBC shows a HB = 10.5g/dl, WCC =  $2 \times 10^9/L$ . A CXR from 2 weeks ago showed hazy shadowing around both hila.

- a. What other questions will you ask?
- b. What is your working diagnosis?
- c. What investigations will you recommend?
- d. Discuss the role of empirical therapy.

3. A 25 yr old has just registered with a GP. He tells the GP that he had a splenectomy 6 months ago following a skiing accident..

- a. What advice will you offer regarding antibiotic prophylaxis?
- b. What other advice regarding infection is relevant?
- c. If the patient was 8 yrs old would your advice alter?

4. A 21 yr old female student has mild dysuria that does not resolve after increasing her fluid intake. She consults the busy local student medical practice and following a short consultation is given an empirical course of 7 days of trimethoprim.

- a. What other history may be relevant here?
- b. How would you criticise the decision making process here?
- c. What alternative management of this patient is appropriate?
- d. Briefly discuss the different laboratory diagnostic methods for the main alternative diagnosis that you are considering.