

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Health
and Social Care (6938/01)

Unit 1: Human Growth and
Development

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The external assessment consisted of three questions matching the three areas of the specification. There were fewer unattempted questions this summer than in previous series indicating that the paper was accessible to candidates with a variety of skills and abilities. Handwriting was again a problem ranging from scripts 2mm tall to completely filling the spaces between the lines and when these factors are added to weak spelling, omitted words and cancellations the examining team have great difficulty with interpretation. Tutors are urged to provide plenty of practice and counselling regarding legibility issues.

The question paper contained slightly shorter response questions enabling weaker candidates to gather marks more easily although specialist vocabulary was frequently wanting. For example Q. 3ai defining the meaning of the menopause had several possible responses but a considerable number of candidates offered "shutting down of the reproductive system" which was not acceptable.

The question stem does not need to be repeated and doing so takes precious examination time that many candidates cannot afford so tutors should discourage this practice when revising. It was pleasing to see that there was a decrease in the universal use of "PIES" and candidates were able to distinguish between questions where the use was profitable and those that were not. On some questions it was apparent the candidates were not considering the mark allocation and wrote too much or more frequently too little.

The biggest issue is not reading and interpreting the question stem correctly and trying to respond using an answer from a previous paper; this is particularly true of Q.2 on Health Promotion where knowledge seems to be contained in "boxes" and candidates are unable to apply to the current questions.

Question 1

1ai. This was intended to be a simple starter question but a large number of candidates' responses attempted to give the cause of the birth of triplets. Most got tied up in eggs, sperm, DNA and genes nearly all of which unsurprisingly were inaccurate.

1aii. Very few inaccurate answers were given for this question.

1b. The most popular correct answer was weight but many candidates failed to give sufficient detail for full marks. However, a surprising number of responses gave gender and proceeded to explain about X and Y chromosomes not realising that they were into inheritance and genetics.

1ci and 1cii. These responses were generally well done and candidates have a good knowledge of motor skills.

1d. This standard question was overall weakly answered although some able candidates acquired 5 or 6 marks. Poor responses centred on being healthy and active without displaying any significant knowledge and understanding.

1e. Able candidates could amass significant marks on this question and even weaker candidates achieved 3-4 marks. Some responses concentrated on the different types and development of play without reference to socialisation and a few were confused with making friends however, generally well done.

Question 2

2ai. Some candidates lost marks by referring to the immunisations such as MMR which was not accepted although "Flu jab" was having the name of the disease mentioned. It was not good to see AS candidates offering HIV, Arthritis and Diabetes as responses. Most candidates achieved full marks.

2aii. More able candidates were successful on this question or those who used transferable knowledge from past papers (on whooping cough) although they believed all women were immunised while pregnant, not strictly true but the basic information was given and credited as being protection from the mother.

2aiii. Marked more leniently due to the lack of knowledge in 2aii, most were able to gain a mark here.

2b. Only a minority of candidates failed to get the model and some key features.

2c. For some inexplicable reason, many candidates described all the models of health promotion and it was a pity that the wider role of health promotion in protecting the population was ignored by so many. Some able candidates gave a very good account and discussed the NHS, reduced risks of epidemics and the benefits of smoking cessation on the public.

2d. This question was generic and any health promotion campaign indicated a non-specific activity however, some candidates referred to specific campaigns of their own choosing. Many candidates either gave advantages and disadvantages of a named campaign while others suggested named campaigns that were successful. In so doing they picked up some marks while other candidates were able to give specific factors referring to target groups, language, publicity etc.

Question 3

3ai. Only weak candidates failed to score a mark here.

3a.ii. Very few candidates gave any positive reasons why job performance might be enhanced but many offered depression. Depression is used by candidates regularly when they mean unhappy or sad; candidates should realise that depression is a serious mental illness that means service users cannot cope with everyday life and this is quite rare in the menopause. Far more women are happy to be relieved of menstruation and fears of pregnancy and can enjoy a sexual relationship minus worries making them more able to focus happily on work.

3b. Some very good responses made high marks and candidates gave insightful discussions about money troubles and relationships. Depression was accepted here as poverty is often a major factor long-term. Some candidates wandered off the question and introduced relationships with the children which gained no credit.

3ci. It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates could gain both marks for defining self-concept.

3cii. Candidates still tend to view self-image as one's appearance and many described bodily effects of multiple childbirth graphically but on the whole this question rated 4+ marks.

3d. Some very good responses were seen for this question on low income effects on health and well-being and many candidates were able to give positive aspects as well. Schools in poorer neighbourhoods should not be viewed as third-rate. This is not a modern view and many have excellent facilities and resources. Gymnasium membership should also not be viewed as a necessity as there are many excellent alternatives such as walking, housework, cycling and gardening which all have additional benefits.

A wide range of scripts were seen, some excellent with logical thought and a good quality to the written communication whereas other scripts tended to rely on everyday basic knowledge and poor writing and spelling skills.

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