

Folklore, Legends, and Human Biology

Medical Folklore And Physiology · Practice Test · 25 Questions

1. Ancient folklore often attributed 'humours' to personality traits; which specific physiological fluid was associated with the 'melancholic' temperament?

- A) Blood
- B) Yellow bile
- C) Black bile
- D) Phlegm

2. The legend of the 'vampire' has been historically linked to porphyria; which human organ system is primarily affected by this group of disorders?

- A) Respiratory system
- B) Heme biosynthetic pathway
- C) Endocrine system
- D) Central nervous system

3. In medieval European folklore, what was the primary medicinal function attributed to the use of 'mummy powder' (ground Egyptian mummies)?

- A) Reducing internal inflammation
- B) Treating headaches and bleeding
- C) Inducing sleep
- D) Stimulating bone growth

4. The 'Werewolf' myth was once used to describe a rare psychiatric condition; what is the clinical term for the delusion where a person believes they are transforming into an animal?

- A) Lycanthropy
- B) Capgras syndrome
- C) Cotard delusion
- D) Boanthropy

5. Medieval legends claimed the 'Mandragora' (Mandrake) root could cure infertility; which potent alkaloid found in the plant actually affects the human parasympathetic nervous system?

- A) Atropine
- B) Scopolamine
- C) Hyoscyamine
- D) All of the above

6. The folklore surrounding 'St. Anthony's Fire' was actually caused by ergotism; which human body system is primarily damaged by the ergot alkaloid toxins?

- A) Circulatory system
- B) Digestive system
- C) Integumentary system
- D) Excretory system

7. Ancient Roman folklore suggested that 'mistletoe' could cure epilepsy; what is the modern scientific classification for the toxic proteins found in the Viscum album plant?

- A) Lectins
- B) Prions
- C) Cytokines
- D) Neurotransmitters

8. Which historical 'miracle cure' derived from folklore involved the ingestion of crushed pearls, which are composed primarily of which chemical compound?

- A) Calcium sulfate
- B) Calcium carbonate
- C) Magnesium silicate
- D) Sodium bicarbonate

9. The legend of the 'changeling' was often used to explain infants suffering from which real-world genetic or developmental condition?

- A) Cystic fibrosis
- B) Phenylketonuria
- C) Turner syndrome
- D) Type 1 Diabetes

10. In ancient medical folklore, 'trepanation' was performed to treat various ailments; modern neurosurgery acknowledges it only for which specific condition?

- A) Epilepsy
- B) Schizophrenia
- C) Intracranial pressure
- D) Migraines

11. What is the biological basis for the 'corpse candle' folklore, where pale lights appear in graveyards due to the release of which gas during decomposition?

- A) Methane
- B) Phosphine
- C) Hydrogen sulfide
- D) Carbon monoxide

12. The 'Mandala' of body proportions in ancient lore often referenced the 'Vitruvian' ideal; which human organ serves as the primary regulator of the homeostatic processes described?

- A) Heart
- B) Hypothalamus
- C) Liver
- D) Pituitary gland

13. Folklore once claimed that 'dragon's blood' (a resin) could heal skin; what is the main chemical component that provides its antioxidant properties?

- A) Taspine
- B) Tannins
- C) Capsaicin
- D) Resveratrol

14. The myth of the 'Fountain of Youth' represents the human desire to reverse cellular aging; which enzyme is responsible for maintaining the length of telomeres in human cells?

- A) Telomerase
- B) DNA polymerase
- C) Ligase
- D) Helicase

15. Historically, 'St. Vitus Dance' was described in folklore as a spiritual possession; what is the modern medical term for the involuntary, jerky movements of Sydenham's chorea?

- A) Bradykinesia
- B) Dyskinesia
- C) Ataxia
- D) Athetosis

16. Which nutrient deficiency, often ignored in ancient folklore, causes the physical symptoms of pellagra, including dermatitis and dementia?

- A) Niacin (B3)
- B) Ascorbic acid (C)
- C) Thiamine (B1)
- D) Cobalamin (B12)

17. The folklore of 'The Evil Eye' was believed to cause sudden infant death; which sudden cardiac arrhythmia is the most likely medical cause for such occurrences?

- A) Long QT syndrome
- B) Atrial fibrillation
- C) Ventricular tachycardia
- D) Bradycardia

18. What organ is physically responsible for the 'heartbreak' pain described in folklore, often involving a surge of catecholamines resulting in Takotsubo cardiomyopathy?

- A) Vagus nerve
- B) Left ventricle
- C) Right atrium
- D) Coronary artery

19. The legend of the 'Succubus' was once used to explain sleep paralysis; which part of the brain is the primary seat of the REM atonia that causes this phenomenon?

- A) Pons
- B) Cerebellum
- C) Thalamus
- D) Hippocampus

20. Folklore attributed 'glowing bones' to cursed spirits, but this is actually a biological phenomenon caused by which element found in bones?

- A) Calcium
- B) Phosphorus
- C) Magnesium
- D) Potassium

21. Which common folkloric practice of bloodletting, meant to balance humours, actually causes a dangerous drop in which blood component?

- A) Hemoglobin
- B) Platelets
- C) Lymphocytes
- D) Fibrinogen

22. The myth of 'mermaids' was likely an observation of which real-world animal, whose mammary glands and lactation look somewhat human?

- A) Dolphin
- B) Manatee
- C) Seal
- D) Walrus

23. Ancient folklore suggested placing 'copper' on wounds to heal infection; what is the known antimicrobial action of copper ions on bacterial cell membranes?

- A) Oligodynamic effect
- B) Osmotic lysis
- C) Protein denaturation
- D) Interference with DNA replication

24. The 'Plague Doctor' costume in folklore used vinegar-soaked sponges; what is the biological limitation of this as a respiratory filter against airborne pathogens?

- A) High pore density
- B) Lack of viral neutralization
- C) Rapid evaporation
- D) Acidic instability

25. The legend of 'sleeping beauty' may have been based on encephalitis lethargica, which affects which specific area of the human brain?

- A) Substantia nigra
- B) Hypothalamus
- C) Amygdala
- D) Prefrontal cortex