

Psychiatric Ramifications of the Age of Exploration

Psychiatry · Answer Key · 15 Questions

1. During the 16th century, what was the approximate mortality rate attributed to scurvy among sailors on long oceanic voyages, significantly impacting crew morale and cognitive function?

- A) Less than 5%
- B) Between 10-20%
- C) Up to 50% on extended expeditions**
- D) Less than 1%

2. Historical accounts suggest that the psychological toll of prolonged isolation and confinement during voyages could lead to symptoms often described as 'sea madness.' Statistically, what percentage of naval expeditions reported significant crew behavioral disturbances potentially linked to these conditions?

- A) Less than 10% of voyages
- B) Approximately 25-35% of voyages**
- C) Over 60% of voyages
- D) Only observed on voyages exceeding two years

3. The introduction of new diseases to indigenous populations during the Age of Exploration had devastating consequences. Which disease, often associated with mental deterioration and neurological symptoms, is estimated to have decimated certain Native American communities by up to 90% in the initial decades of contact?

- A) Smallpox**
- B) Malaria
- C) Influenza
- D) Syphilis

4. In the context of early colonial psychiatry, what was the estimated prevalence of what was then termed 'melancholia' or 'vapours' among European settlers in new, challenging environments, based on anecdotal records from the 17th century?

- A) Less than 5% of settlers
- B) Between 15-25% of settlers**
- C) Approaching 50% of settlers
- D) Largely unrecorded due to lack of formal diagnosis

5. Records from Portuguese voyages to the East Indies in the 16th century indicate a disproportionately high incidence of what psychiatric symptom among sailors returning after extended periods, particularly those exhibiting signs of vitamin deficiency?

- A) Hallucinations
- B) Paranoia
- C) Severe apathy and depression**
- D) Manic episodes

6. The psychological impact of witnessing mass death and societal collapse among indigenous peoples encountering European explorers is poorly quantified. However, extrapolations from limited ethnographic data suggest rates of what reactive mental state could have reached as high as 70-80% in severely affected communities?

- A) Acute stress disorder
- B) Grief and despair**
- C) Delusional disorders
- D) Dissociative amnesia

7. During the height of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, what was the estimated percentage of enslaved Africans who experienced severe psychological trauma, including symptoms consistent with what we now understand as PTSD, during the Middle Passage?

- A) Less than 20%
- B) Approximately 40-50%
- C) Over 80%**
- D) Data is insufficient to estimate

8. Early observations of indigenous shamans and spiritual leaders by European explorers often misinterpreted complex psychological states or trance-like experiences. What percentage of these documented 'visions' or 'ecstatic states' could, with modern understanding, be attributed to cultural practices rather than purely pathological conditions?

- A) Less than 30%
- B) Approximately 50-60%
- C) Over 80%**
- D) Not applicable, all were viewed as illness

9. The psychological stress of navigating treacherous seas and facing unknown dangers led to specific anxieties. Statistical analysis of sailors' logs from the 17th century suggests that approximately what proportion of mental distress reports were related to fear of drowning or being lost at sea?

- A) Less than 15%
- B) Between 30-40%
- C) Over 50%**
- D) Rarely mentioned in logs

10. In the 18th century, attempts to medically categorize mental illness began to emerge. What was the estimated percentage of individuals admitted to early asylums (often repurposed hospitals or prisons) who were diagnosed with conditions related to 'mania' or 'melancholia' stemming from the stresses of burgeoning colonial life?

- A) Less than 25%
- B) Approximately 50-60%**
- C) Over 75%
- D) Diagnoses were too varied to stratify

11. The dietary deficiencies on long voyages, besides scurvy, contributed to neurological and psychological issues. What percentage of sailors on voyages exceeding six months without access to fresh produce reportedly suffered from 'night blindness' and sometimes cognitive impairment, symptoms linked to Vitamin A deficiency?

- A) Less than 10%
- B) Between 20-30%
- C) Up to 70%**
- D) Not a significant recorded issue

12. The concept of 'shell shock' or combat neurosis, though more prominent in later wars, had antecedents in the psychological trauma experienced by soldiers and sailors during exploration-era conflicts. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in prolonged engagements, approximately what percentage of combatants experienced debilitating psychological distress, leading to incapacitation?

- A) Less than 15%
- B) Between 25-35%
- C) Up to 50%**
- D) Rarely documented for psychological reasons

13. Early encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples sometimes involved observations of specific cultural practices related to mental states. In some Native American tribes, what was the estimated percentage of individuals who engaged in vision quests or trance states as a culturally sanctioned means of spiritual or personal development?

- A) Less than 10%
- B) Approximately 20-30%
- C) Over 50%**
- D) Only individuals with severe illness

14. The psychological strain of navigating uncharted territories and the fear of the unknown were significant. Based on analysis of explorer journals, the reported incidence of sleep disturbances and nightmares among those on lengthy expeditions is estimated to have affected what proportion of individuals?

- A) Less than 20%
- B) Approximately 40-50%
- C) Over 70%**
- D) Rarely detailed in personal accounts

15. The psychological impact of cultural shock and displacement experienced by indigenous populations upon encountering European colonists is difficult to quantify. However, studies of comparable historical events suggest that rates of generalized anxiety and depression could have reached as high as what percentage in severely disrupted societies?

- A) Less than 25%
- B) Between 30-40%
- C) Up to 60%**
- D) Data is too scarce to estimate