

History, Medicine through time

Lesson 19 of 30

Worksheet:

How did hospitals change over time and improve prevention and treatment of illness and disease?

Mr Prudden



Medieval hospitals

How many were there? The number rose in the Middle Ages. By 1500, there were 1100 hospitals.

Who ran the hospitals? 30% were owned and run by the Church, attached to **monasteries** and **convents**. The rest were funded by wealthy people who had left money in their will.

Who cared for the sick? Nuns washed and cleaned the patients. For example, hospitals were kept clean and patients' bed linen and clothing were changed regularly. Monks prayed for the sick and led Church services. There were no **physicians** or **surgeons**.

What was the purpose of Hospitals? The purpose of hospitals was to care for the sick, not to cure or treat disease.

Who was rejected? Infectious or **terminal patients** were often rejected, as were pregnant women and the mentally ill.



Renaissance hospitals

How many were there? Most hospitals were closed due to Henry VIII's **dissolution of the monasteries**. By 1700, there were only 5 hospitals left in the country (all in London).

Who ran the hospitals? Smaller hospitals were opened to replace those that were closed, funded by charities. Some were taken over by local councils.

What was the purpose of Hospitals? There was a greater focus on medical treatment. Patients were visited by **physicians**, who observed symptoms and prescribed treatments. Medicines were mixed by an **apothecary**.

Who was cared for? Mainly the elderly poor, but people with wounds and curable disease, such as fevers and skin conditions, began to be cared for.

Who was rejected? Patients who were contagious. Instead, they were treated by specialist hospitals called **pest hospitals**. These cared for patients suffering from the plague or pox.



Hospitals by 1700

By 1700, there were only 5 hospitals left in the country – and they were all London. However, new hospitals did begin to appear in other cities in the 18th century, founded using donations from wealthy people and from members of the middle classes, such as lawyers and businessmen.

Hospitals continued to become places where sick people were treated, as opposed to places where people could rest and pray.

Doctors visited patients regularly and there was a **surgeon** or **apothecary** on site for daily treatments.

A small staff of untrained nurses cared for the patients. Nursing was not a respected profession and nurses were often criticised for being dirty or drunk.



Hospitals by 1700

Hospitals were not places that people often chose to be treated. The rich received medical treatment, and even surgery, in their own homes, which were much safer.

Unfortunately, as more people started to attend, hospitals became less **sanitary**. They became less strict about turning away infectious patients.

Doctors and nurses went from patient to patient and ward to ward without washing their hands or changing their clothes which meant diseases began to spread.

Cramped and stuffy wards, which were not cleaned often enough or effectively enough, helped infections to spread quickly.



Florence Nightingale in the Crimea

When the **Crimean War** broke out between Britain, France and Russia in 1854, **Florence Nightingale** took 38 nurses to the Crimea, which lies between Russia and Turkey. Arriving at the army hospital at **Scutari**, **Nightingale** and her nurses were appalled by the dirty conditions.

Nightingale ordered 300 scrubbing brushes to get rid of any dirt near patients being treated. Nurses were organised to treat nearly 2,000 wounded soldiers. Clean bedding and good meals were provided.

In 6 months **Nightingale** slashed the death rate from **40% to 2%**.

By the time **Nightingale** returned to Britain in 1856, she was a national hero. There had been a great deal of publicity about the conditions in war hospitals, and **Nightingale** was famous for making a big difference. This gave her credibility and helped her to make changes to hospitals in Britain.



How did Florence Nightingale improve hospitals?

Training of nurses

Nightingale wrote *Notes on Nursing* in 1859, setting out the key role of a nurse and the importance of thorough training.

In 1860, **Nightingale** set up the **Nightingale School for Nurses** at St Thomas' Hospital, London. Here, nurses were trained mainly on **sanitary** matters.

Nightingale made nursing seem like a respectable occupation. '**Nightingale nurses**' were more often middle-class women. Previously, nurses had been from working-class backgrounds, and had a reputation for being drunk, flirtatious and uncaring.

Rigorous training turned nursing into a profession, rather than a simple, unskilled job. This encouraged more women to sign up, and so the number and skill of nurses grew rapidly.



How did Florence Nightingale improve hospitals?

Cleanliness

On **Nightingale's** recommendations, new hospitals were built out of materials that could be easily cleaned. Nightingale believed dirt spread disease, so tiles on the floors and painted walls and ceilings made it possible to wash all surfaces and get rid of the dirt.

Nightingale encouraged good ventilation to make sure patients got fresh, clean air to breathe, as well as clothing and washing facilities for patients.

The Nightingale School for Nurses ensured nurses were trained mainly on **sanitary** matters.

Hospital design

Nightingale promoted '**pavilion style**' hospitals, where separate wards were built in hospitals to ensure infectious patients could be kept separate.



Hospitals by 1900

Many different wards split up infectious patients from those requiring surgery.

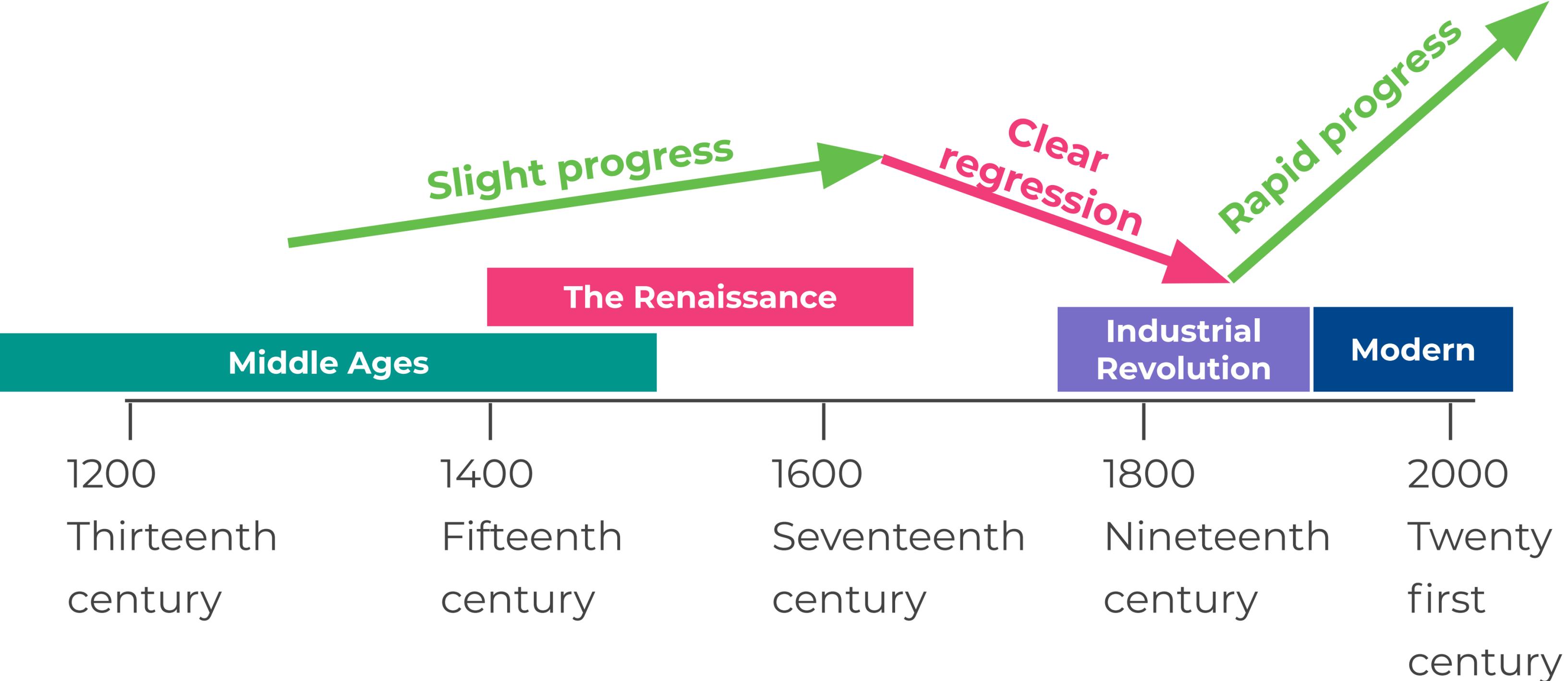
Operating theatres and specialist departments for new medical equipment provided separate spaces for certain procedures.

Cleanliness was now of the utmost importance. **Antiseptics** were used to clean up **germs** and prevent them from getting in to begin with. **Operating theatres** were rigorously cleaned. From 1887 all medical instruments were **sterilised**. This was because **Louis Pasteur's germ theory** of **1861** had scientifically linked dirt and disease. Faced with scientific proof, the government could no longer ignore the need to fund public health reforms, this included hospital conditions.

Doctors, junior doctors who were training and trained nurses were now a common sight.



Hospital progress over time



Glossary

- **Antiseptics** Chemicals used to destroy bacteria and prevent infection.
- **Convents** Buildings occupied by a community of monks or nuns living under religious vows.
- **Dissolution of the monasteries** Henry VIII split from the Catholic Church in 1533 and created the Church of England. In 1536, he closed monasteries and convents and confiscated their land.
- **Germ theory** The theory that germs cause disease, often by infection through the air.
- **Monasteries** Buildings occupied by a community of monks or nuns living under religious vows.



Glossary

- **Pest hospitals** A new type of hospital that began to appear in the Renaissance which catered only for people suffering from plague or pox.
- **Sanitary** Hygienic and clean. Something that is unhygienic and dirty is **unsanitary**.
- **Sterilise** To destroy all living microorganisms from surfaces and surgical instruments, e.g. on a scalpel before an operation.
- **Terminal patient** A patient who will die because their disease cannot be cured or adequately treated.



Comprehension Questions

1. Can you describe two problems with hospitals by 1700?
2. How did Florence Nightingale improve the cleanliness of hospitals?
3. What was a 'pavilion style' hospital?
4. Can you describe two big improvements made to hospitals by 1900?
5. Challenge Q: How far do you agree that Florence Nightingale was mostly responsible for improved hospital conditions in the second half of the 19th century?

You may want to use the following sentence starters and hints to help you.

In some ways Florence Nightingale was mostly responsible for improved hospital conditions. For example...

However, it wasn't just Nightingale who was responsible for improved hospital conditions. For example...

Overall, I mostly agree that...

