

Cholera Public Health Campaign

The Ghost Map is a historical account of the terrifying outbreak of cholera in the summer of 1854 in London and how a pair of interdisciplinary thinkers worked to find a solution to the deadly problem. If you were a believer of germ theory or miasma theory, how would design a public health campaign warning people about the dangers of cholera?

Part 1: Essay

In an essay address these questions

- What prompts the Board of Health and other powerful people in London to change their perspective on disease and its transmission? Does viewing an epidemic or disease as unhygienic change the public's willingness to find a cure? Are there contemporary diseases that face a similar challenge of public perception as cholera faced in London in 1854?
- Given the relative living conditions, the cultural life, the economic opportunities, and any other costs and benefits, would you have chosen to live in London during 1854, the Victorian Era? Why do you think John Snow and others who could presumably afford to live elsewhere chose to live in a city that apparently seemed to always be on the brink of collapse into pure squalor?
- Why did so many people stay in London once the disease became an epidemic?
- Snow had to work harder to disprove the miasmatisms with his analysis of the Lambeth and S&V water supply case because the data showed that the subdistricts that relied on the polluted water source also happened to be in less desirable industrial zones. Discuss modern examples of how socio-geo-economic issues can influence scientific and medical assessments.
- What is the next cholera-like disease, and what are we doing about it?
- During the outbreak, the London Times and Morning Chronicle were filled with a plethora of dubious remedies from a variety of unqualified sources. Compare the Internet of today with the London Times of 1854. Has information literacy improved such that the average citizen can distinguish trustworthy advice from chicanery on the Web?

Part 2: Public Health Campaign

- Create a public health campaign (poster, flyer, video, jingle) warning people about the dangers of cholera and/or showing them how to avoid the danger of cholera
- Explain in an essay
 - why you selected germ theory or miasma
 - who the audience is for the poster
 - why you chose the medium you used
 - how would you get the word out today

Resources

- Use 3 outside resources

