

Lecture 1 - History of health & disease

What kind of evidence is available? – Professional medical texts, skeletal remains, literary texts, legal documents, birth, marriage & death registers etc.

Example 1: Evidence of bubonic plague (the black death)

- **Written accounts** - Machionne di Coppo Stefani, The Florentine Chronicle – he lived through the black death, he wrote his chronicle a few years after the event; could question the accuracy of these documents
- **Photographic evidence**
 - Between 1890 & 1920s a plague pandemic (3rd pandemic) spread from Hong Kong along world's major trade routes, killing 10 million people worldwide – spread through increased trade
 - 12 major plague outbreaks in Australia between 1900 & 1925 (carried by ships) – cases were reported in NSW, Vic, Qld, WA & NT = total mortality was 550
 - Plague hit Sydney between Jan-Aug 1900, spreading from the waterfront, rats carried plague throughout the city – within 8 months, 303 cases were reported & 103 people were dead
- **Newspaper reports** – more important as they became more regular, was able to document the accounts as they were happening. Evidence to allow us to piece together historical assumptions together.

How does this effect how we understand health & disease in modern times? – Enables us to appreciate development of medical knowledge (for better or worse), opportunity to reflect on structural & conceptual basis of modern health practises

Review of historical paradigms *rough dates*

- Pre-history 3500BC – existence of humans
- Ancient times 500AD – Romans, Egyptians, ancient India & China
- Middle ages 400 -1500 AD – Renaissance, rise of Islam (7th century – rapid spread), dark ages (400 – 900 AD), high middle ages (1200 onwards)
 - Medieval world – barbarians, invasion of England by Anglo-Saxons
- Modern era – space age, world war, conquest of America

Lecture 2 – Foundations of western concepts of health & disease

Medicine in Ancient Egypt & Mesopotamia

- Mesopotamian civilisation (where Iraq & Syria are now) – largely oriented around the Tigris & Euphrates Rivers

Ancient Egyptian civilisation (From 3000 til 0 BCE) – oriented along the Nile River

- Sources of historical medical information – Hieroglyphs, Artistic representations, Medical papyri, study of human remains; both skeletal & soft tissues of ancient Egyptians