

China 1945 - 1975

Witness History

We are going to watch a clip from a BBC News programme, *Witness History*, where we will hear a first-person account of being a 'barefoot doctor'.

Task (00:00 – 02:05): as we watch, complete the **True or False** activity. If false, write the correct answer below in the space provided.

True / False

1. Barefoot doctors came from Mao's policy to improve healthcare across China. Following this, it was claimed every commune now had a hospital or clinic, providing medical attention where there previously had been none.

True / False

2. Barefoot doctors received high-levels of training – they were forced to leave their regular jobs, and commit themselves to learn how to treat the most complex illnesses for numerous years.

True / False

3. Barefoot doctors were never allowed to wear shoes due to a risk of contamination.

True / False

4. Barefoot doctors not only treated humans but sometimes animals too, or used animals to practise treatments, such as injecting medicine.

True / False

5. People in the villages did not trust the barefoot doctors, and were hesitant to trust their judgements.

True / False

6. Whilst many perceived barefoot doctors to be beneficial to healthcare in China, others believed they were a product of the Cultural Revolution's impact on the education system.

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Answers

1. Barefoot doctors came from Mao's policy to improve healthcare across China. Following this, it was claimed every commune now had a hospital or clinic, providing medical attention where there previously had been none.
2. The training of barefoot doctors was limited, as they had to continue with their regular jobs such as farming - they provided basic services to villagers for conditions such as colds, infections, and diarrhoea
3. The name 'barefoot doctor' refers to the fact that sometimes they had to remove their shoes to work in the farmland – they were not always barefoot.
4. Barefoot doctors not only treated humans but sometimes animals too, or used animals to practise treatments, such as injecting medicine.
5. People in the villagers trusted the barefoot doctors, particularly given that there was no alternative.
6. Whilst many perceived barefoot doctors to be beneficial to healthcare in China, others believed they were a product of the Cultural Revolution's impact on the education system.