



Medical Milestones

From 5-14 January 2007 we conducted an online poll to decide the most important medical advance since 1840. From a list initially suggested by our readers, an expert panel chose the top 15, which formed the basis for the vote. We also published a supplement, where champions argued the merits of each individual advance.

Sanitation emerged as the winner.

Watch the webcast announcing the result

Results of poll

Most important advance		
	Number	Proportion (%)
Anaesthesia	1574	13.9
Antibiotics	1642	14.5
Chlorpromazine	73	0.6
Computers	405	3.6
Discovery of DNA structure	1000	8.8
Evidence-based medicine	636	5.6
Germ theory	843	7.4
Immunology	182	1.6
Medical imaging (x-rays, etc.)	471	4.2
Oral contraceptive pill	842	7.4
Oral rehydration therapy	308	2.7
Risks of smoking	183	1.6
Sanitation (clean water and sewage disposal)	1795	15.8
Tissue culture	50	0.4
Vaccines	1337	11.8
Total Respondents	11341	100.0

Visitor category		
	Number	Proportion (%)
Doctor	3198	28.6

Nurse/midwife	330	3.0
Other healthcare professional	677	6.1
Academic researcher	1144	10.2
Public health/Health policy	487	4.4
Student	1582	14.2
Librarian/Information specialist	188	1.7
Education	462	4.1
Industry	437	3.9
Member of the public	2438	21.8
Press/media	220	2.0
Total Respondents	11163	100.0

Country		
	Number	Proportion (%)
Australia	315	2.8
Bulgaria	573	5.0
Canada	604	5.3
Germany	200	1.8
India	256	2.3
Italy	547	4.8
Spain	324	2.8
United Kingdom	4281	37.7
United States	2270	20.0
Other countries	1992	17.5
Total respondents	11362	100.0

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Rapid Responses:

Read all Rapid Responses

Medicine vs Engineering

Jonathan Kyffin

bmj.com, 19 Jan 2007 [Full text]

Milestones in smoking research

Allan House

bmj.com, 21 Jan 2007 [Full text]

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