

University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate

Biomedical Admissions Test

Wednesday

5 November 2003

Morning

30 minutes

SECTION 3 Writing Task

Instructions to Candidates

Please read this page carefully, but do not open this question paper until you are told that you may do so.

A separate answer sheet is provided for this section. Please check you have one.

Please first write your Biomedical Admissions Test candidate number and UCAS number (if known) in the spaces provided on the answer sheet. Please write very clearly.

Please also write your BMAT candidate number in the space below.

BMAT Candidate Number

This question paper contains a choice of four tasks, of which you must answer only **one**. It also provides space in which you may make any preliminary notes you wish, but your answer must be written on the single page answer sheet.

The tasks each provide an opportunity for you to show how well you can

- select, develop and organise ideas and
- communicate them effectively in writing.

Before you begin writing, think carefully about what you need to say and the ways in which the organisation and layout of your response might help convey your message. Diagrams etc. may be used if they enhance communication.

Take care to show how well you can write and be concise, clear and accurate.

Dictionaries may NOT be used.

Remember that when you are told that you may begin you will have only 30 minutes to choose and complete your task, and that your complete response must be contained on the single page provided for your answer. The disciplines involved in this are regarded as key features of the task.

Please wait to be told you may begin before turning this page.

This paper consists of 3 printed pages and 1 blank page.

YOU MUST ANSWER ONLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- 1 The following passage is taken from an article, 'Is the sale of body parts wrong?' by J Savulescu, in the Journal of Medical Ethics, published in June 2003

Discussion of the sale of organs is overshadowed by cases of murder, and corruption. But there is also a serious ethical issue about whether people should be allowed to sell parts of the body. It applies not only to organs, such as the kidney or parts of the liver, but also to tissues, such as bone marrow, gametes (eggs and sperm) and even genetic material. The usual argument in favour of allowing the sale of organs is that we need to increase supply. In the US, as few as 15% of people who need kidney transplants ever get a kidney.

Some have proposed an "ethical market" in organs. There would be only one purchaser, which would buy all organs and distribute according to some fair conception of medical priority. There would be no direct sales, no exploitation of low income countries and their populations.

But there may be a stronger argument in favour of sale of body parts. People have a right to make a decision to sell a body part. If we should be allowed to sell our labour, why not sell the means to that labour? If we should be allowed to risk damaging our body for pleasure (by smoking or skiing), why not for money which we could use to realise other goods in life? If we allow people to die for their country, it seems we should allow them to risk death or injury for the chance to improve the quality of their lives or their children's lives or for anything else they value. Money for these people is just a means to realise what they value in life. Whether or not a private market in organs will increase supply or improve its quality, it seems that people have a right to sell them.

Savulescu J. Is the sale of body parts wrong? *J Med Ethics*, 2003; 29: 138-139.
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Explain what you think the author means by the term 'ethical market'. Present an argument against the legalised sale of organs. What is your own view of the author's assertion that individuals have the right to sell their own body parts?

- 2 **A little learning is a dangerous thing**
(Alexander Pope)

Explain what you think the author means by this statement. Advance an argument against the statement above, i.e. in support of the proposition 'a little learning is *not* a dangerous thing'. What do you think determines whether or not learning can be a dangerous thing?

3 It is ridiculous to treat the living body as a mechanism.

What does the above statement imply? Give examples that illustrate why it might sometimes be sensible to treat the body as a mechanisms and others that illustrate the opposite. How might you resolve this apparent contradiction?

4 Our belief in any particular natural law cannot have a safer basis than our unsuccessful critical attempts to refute it.

(Karl Popper)

What do you understand by the statement above?. Can you suggest examples where scientific experiment might not proceed by attempting to refute a hypothesis? To what extent do you think the statement accurately reflects the nature of scientific method?

Use this space and the next page for notes *etc.* if you wish. Remember that your response must be written on the single page answer sheet provided.

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