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Australasian Faculty of  
Public Health Medicine

## **Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine (AFPMM)**

### **Oral Examination**

### **2019 Sample Questions**

### **Question 1: Asbestos in public housing**

You are a public health physician in a government health department. On the front page of Monday's newspaper is a story about a man with lung cancer who lives with his family in public housing built with asbestos-containing materials. The story alleges that asbestos in public housing is common, and that there is broad community concern about exposure to asbestos and the risk of asbestos-related disease.

You have been tasked with investigating these allegations and working with the relevant agencies to assess and manage potential risks associated with asbestos in public housing.

**Discuss the approach you will take.**

## **Question 2: Bowel cancer screening**

In Australia, the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program invites individuals in eligible age groups to participate in bowel cancer screening. This screening uses a home faecal occult blood test.

Currently, individuals from 50 to 74 years of age are offered screening every 2 years.

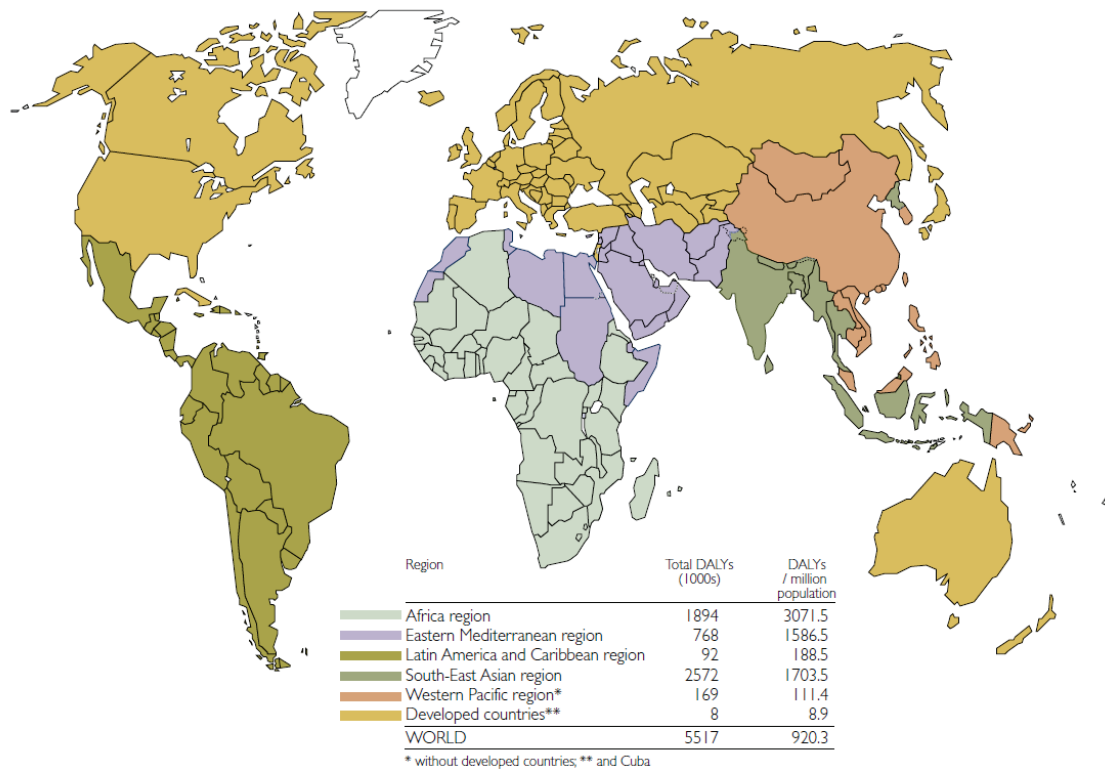
An alternative test for bowel cancer screening is colonoscopy. The sensitivity and specificity of colonoscopy for bowel cancer detection are both greater than 99%, whereas the sensitivity and specificity for faecal occult blood test are 95% and 93% respectively.

**Discuss whether colonoscopy or faecal occult blood test is a more appropriate test for population-based screening for early detection of bowel cancer.**

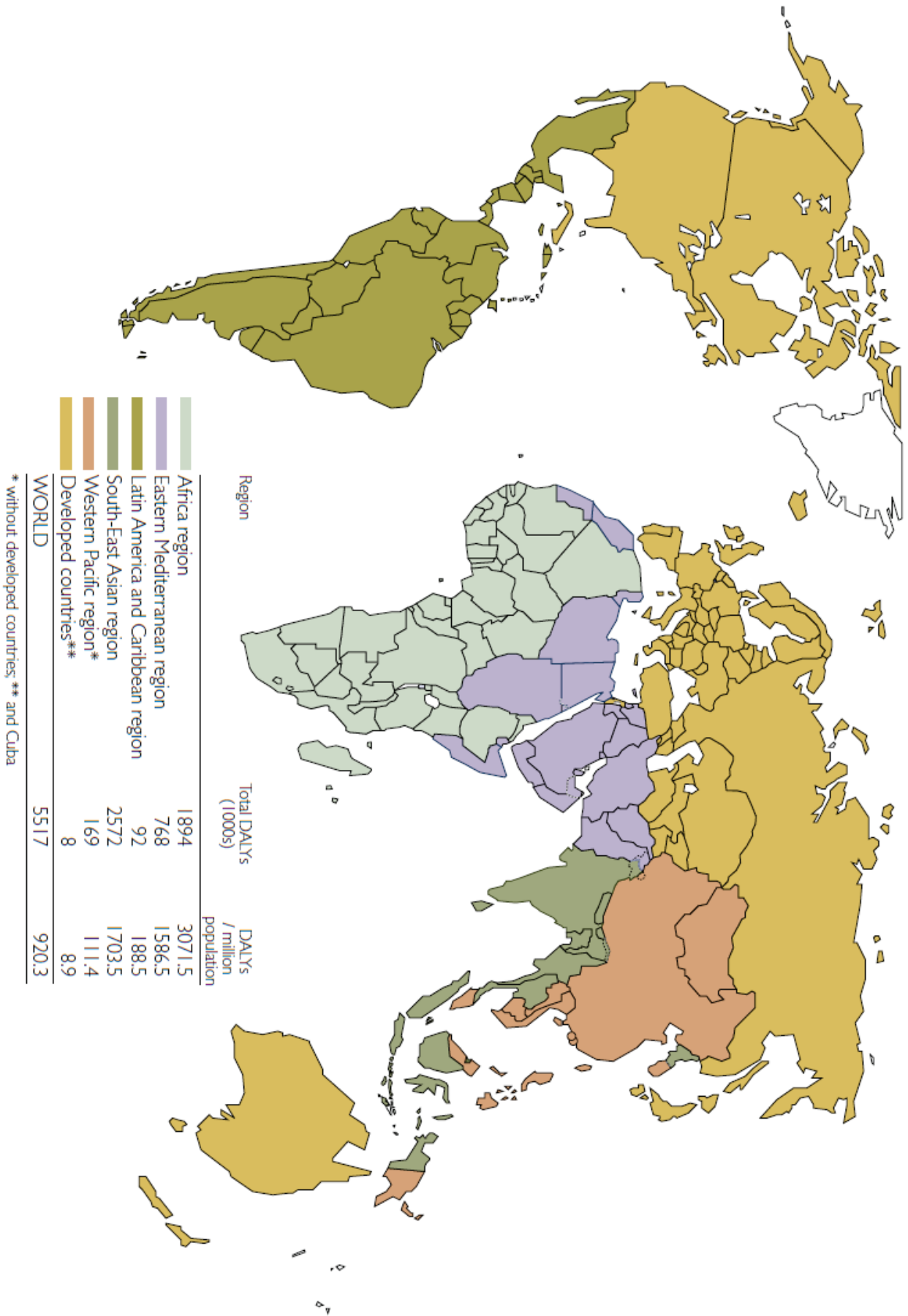
**In your answer, include a consideration of the attributes of each test.**

### Question 3: Climate change and health

The figure below is taken from the 2003 World Health Organization report on climate change and human health. It shows the estimated impact of climate change on health outcomes globally, measured in DALYs, in the year 2000.



- (a) Describe and interpret the data presented in the figure regarding the estimated health impacts of climate change globally. (40%)
- (b) Discuss underlying factors that may explain the estimated health outcome differences due to climate change between Australia/New Zealand and the South-East Asian region, as shown in the figure. (60%)



#### **Question 4: Compulsory treatment for drug and alcohol dependence**

You are a public health physician working in a government health department. The Minister for Health has publicly expressed their support for the compulsory treatment of individuals with severe drug and/or alcohol dependence, consistent with similar policies that are in place in a number of other jurisdictions.

You have been tasked with developing a policy for your jurisdiction. The objective of the policy is to protect the health and safety of persons with severe substance dependence through a compulsory inpatient management program.

**(a) Outline how you would go about developing this policy. (70%)**

**(b) Describe the challenges and issues associated with this type of policy. (30%)**

### Question 5: Data linkage

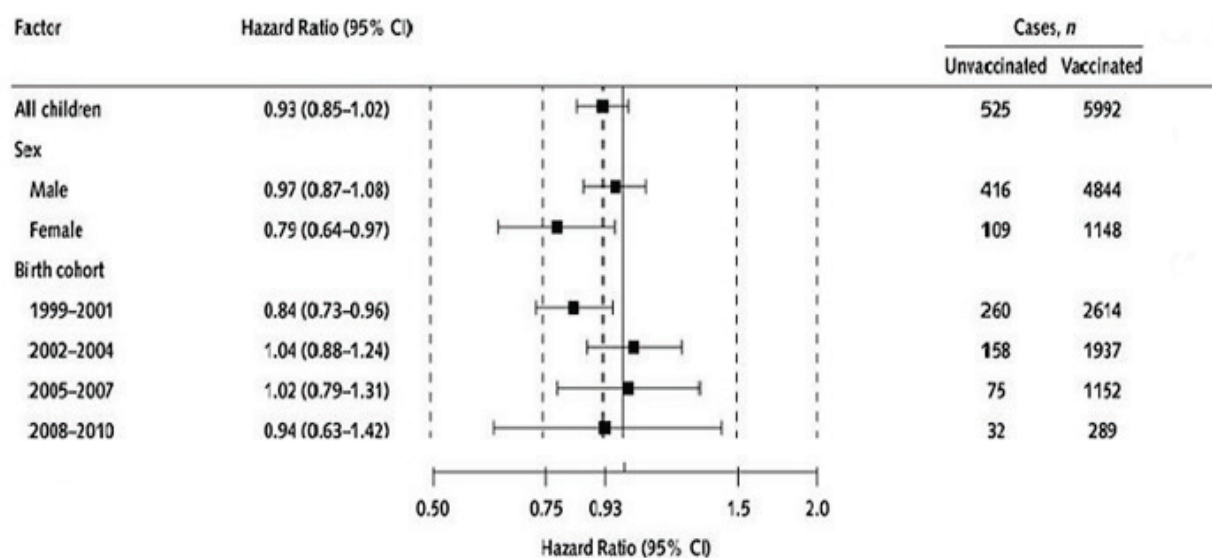
The following figure presents results from a national data linkage study into the association between measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccination and autism in children born in Denmark from 1999 to 2010. The study included 6517 children with autism among 657,461 children born during the study period.

Autism hazard ratios, adjusted for age, birth year cohort, sex, other childhood vaccinations, sibling history of autism and autism risk score, were used to compare all children who received MMR vaccination with those who did not.

The figure includes fully adjusted results for all children with autism, along with two subgroup analyses. These are stratified by either sex or birth year cohort with hazard ratios adjusted for the other variables.

In the figure, the hazard ratios are depicted on a logarithmic scale, with bars representing 95% confidence intervals.

#### Association between MMR vaccination and autism in children born in Denmark 1999–2010



(a) Describe and interpret the results in the figure. (80%)

(b) Based on these results, what do you conclude about the association between MMR vaccination and autism? (20%)

### **Question 6: Smoking in pregnancy**

Smoking during pregnancy is more common in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (44%) and Maori women (43%), compared with the prevalence of smoking during pregnancy in the general population of Australia (10%) and New Zealand (18%).

You are working within a primary health network (PHN) [Australia]/district health board (DHB) [New Zealand]. You have received funding to tackle the issue of smoking in pregnancy for First Nations peoples in your jurisdiction.

- (a) Discuss the underlying factors for the high rates of smoking during pregnancy for First Nations peoples in your jurisdiction. (20%)**
- (b) Outline your approach to developing an action plan to address this issue. (80%)**



### **Question 7: Typhoid**

You are working in a public health unit and receive a call from a paediatrician at the children's hospital. A 3-year-old girl has been diagnosed with typhoid fever, caused by *Salmonella typhi*. She lives in your jurisdiction; however, 10 days ago she returned to Australia after a 1-month trip to India with her parents and two siblings.

Since returning home, she has attended a child care centre. Her father works as a chef.

**How would you manage this situation?**

### **Question 8: Skin cancer**

Two in three Australians/New Zealanders will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.

As a public health physician working in a government health department, you have been tasked with leading the development of a health promotion program to address skin cancer risks in your jurisdiction.

- (a) Outline the steps you will take to develop this program. (60%)**
- (b) Describe the health promotion actions that will be implemented through this program. (40%)**