

HUMOR IN MEDICINE

'Star Trek' Medical Boards

Howard J. Bennett, MD

Washington, DC

A few years ago, I had a brief scare when it looked like my daughter was turning into a Klingon.¹ Although I thought I was alone at the time, a physician/parent submitted her own experience concerning extraterrestrial transformation.² After this correspondence was published, another physician wrote to the Journal. Although Dr Strouse was not worried about any of his children, he did propose a system for classifying doctors according to their interest in *Star Trek*.³ As a follow-up to Dr Strouse's letter, we are now publishing the first qualifying exam in *Star Trek Medicine*. As stipulated in my response to Dr Strouse,⁴ this test allows candidates to qualify at any level regardless of whether they watched reruns or first-run episodes.

1. In the original series, a female from the planet Sigma Draconis IV kidnapped Spock and removed one of his organs to help run their society. Which organ did they take?

- His pancreas
- His seminiferous tubules
- His kidney
- His brain

2. In "The Naked Now," a virus caused the members of the *Enterprise-D* to lose their inhibitions and act wildly out of character. The virus was so contagious, even Data was affected. What did the

normally sedate android do with Tasha Yar as a result of this infection?

- They did a tango.
- They had sex.
- They took in dinner and a movie.
- They argued over who was in command on the bridge.

3. In *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, Kirk shows his age by needing to use which of the following?

- A toupee
- A hearing aid
- Glasses
- Preparation H

4. What's the most distinguishing characteristic of the chief medical officer on *Star Trek Voyager*?

- He makes housecalls.
- He does not have to submit reimbursement forms to Medicare.
- He has a bit of an attitude.
- He is a computer-generated holographic doctor.

5. During a mission to the planet Mariposa, Worf fainted on the bridge. Although this embarrassed him, Dr Pulaski insisted that he report to sickbay for an examination. What caused Worf to collapse?

- Rigelian fever
- Thelusian flu
- Rop'ngor (a common Klingon childhood illness)
- Transporter psychosis

6. Spock is half-human and half-Vulcan. Counselor Troi is half-human and half-Betazoid. B'Elanna Torres is half-human and half-Klingon. Why can dif-

From the Departments of Health Care Sciences and Pediatrics, The George Washington University Medical Center, Washington, DC. Dr. Bennett is the editor of The Best of Medical Humor: A Collection of Articles, Essays, Poetry & Letters Published in the Medical Literature. Correspondence should be addressed to Howard J. Bennett, MD, 2820 McKinley Place, NW, Washington, DC 20015.

ferent humanoid species procreate in the future?

- a. Love conquers all.
- b. Pergonal Plus
- c. With the completion of the human genome project on earth and other planets in the year 2148, scientists were able to devise gene suppresser therapy that allowed different species to mate and reproduce.
- d. It keeps the ratings up.

7. In "The Deadly Years," Captain Kirk and other members of a landing party age rapidly after beaming down to Gamma Hydra IV. What caused this condition?

- a. A prank by the makeup crew
- b. A time warp
- c. An unknown form of radiation
- d. Kalla-Nohra syndrome

8. Which *Star Trek* doctor is nicknamed "Bones"?

- a. Leonard McCoy
- b. Beverly Crusher
- c. Julian Bashir
- d. Katherine Pulaski

9. During a mission to Audet IX, Deanna Troi was "impregnated" by a noncorporeal life-form while she slept. The alien did this to better understand humans by experiencing what they do as living beings. To accomplish this in one episode, the alien had to speed things up a bit. As a result, Troi had the shortest full-term pregnancy in the history of television. How long was she pregnant?

- a. Two weeks
- b. Two days
- c. Two hours
- d. Two minutes

10. Although 24th century medicine has not solved the problem of male pattern baldness, Captain Picard does have an artificial organ in his body. Name that organ.

- a. His heart
- b. His liver

- c. His prostate
- d. His spleen

11. Which of the following quotes is not attributable to Dr McCoy?

- a. "He's dead, Jim."
- b. "I'm a doctor, not a mechanic."
- c. "It's not natural to have your molecules spread all over the galaxy."
- d. "Get me a CBC, a chem 7, and four units of O negative blood stat!"

12. What beings featured on *Star Trek* have 23 ribs, 2 livers, an eight-chambered heart, and backup synaptic system?

- a. Klingons
- b. Cardassians
- c. Bajorans
- d. The Borg

13. Why don't *Star Trek* personnel get sick more often when beaming back from alien worlds?

- a. Replicator food contains trace amounts of Ceclor.
- b. The transporter's biofilters eliminate foreign DNA from the incoming pattern.
- c. The show's writers have a limited supply of cool-sounding alien diseases.
- d. Crew members take 2 g of vitamin C every day.

14. Spock dies unexpectedly near the end of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. What caused Spock's demise?

- a. Altarian encephalitis
- b. He choked on a Tribble.
- c. Radiation exposure
- d. McCoy shot him with a phaser after Spock said "Fascinating" one too many times.

15. The Klingon word for doctor is *Qel*. What does *Haqtaj nob jIH* mean?

- a. "I don't see walk-ins."
- b. "Give me the scalpel."
- c. "Anesthesia? We don't use anesthesia."
- d. "If you put me on call tonight, I will KILL you!"

Scoring the Exam

The answer key can be found at the end of the article, and the ranking schedule proposed by *Star Fleet Medical* can be found in the Table. The names of all

First Level Trekkers will be published in a special issue of the Journal. All others take heart—additional exams may appear in the future.

TABLE

Certification in *Star Trek* Medicine

Correct Answers	Ranking	Comment
13-15	1st Level Trekker	Congratulations! Gene Roddenberry would be proud of you.
10-12	2nd Level Trekker	Good job. If you watch two episodes a day, you'll do better next time.
7-9	3rd Level Trekker	Not bad. Try studying the material in the Remedial Reading section.
4-6	4th Level Trekker	Try a less demanding field like <i>Babylon 5</i> or <i>Star Wars</i> .
0-3	5th Level Trekker	You have the intelligence of a Caldorian eel.

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3. Strouse WF. Trekker classification system [letter]. *J Fam Pract* 1995; 40:408.
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4. Nemecek L. *The Star Trek Next Generation* companion. New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1995.
5. Okrand M. *The Klingon dictionary*. New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1992.
6. Okuda M, Okuda D, Mirek D. *The Star Trek encyclopedia*. New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1994.

REMEDIAL READING

1. Asherman A. *The Star Trek* companion. New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1993.
2. Dillard JM. *Star Trek—where no one has gone before: a history in pictures*. New York, NY: Pocket Books, 1994.
3. Hise J. *The unauthorized Trekker's guide to the Next Generation and Deep Space Nine*. New York, NY: Harper Prism, 1995.

ANSWER KEY

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|------|-------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. d | 11. d |
| 2. b | 7. c | 12. a |
| 3. c | 8. a | 13. b |
| 4. d | 9. b | 14. c |
| 5. c | 10. a | 15. b |

'HUMOR IN MEDICINE' ANECDOTE CONTEST

Do you have an amusing anecdote about one of your experiences in medicine? It can involve anything from patient care to embarrassing moments in medical school. Between now and December 1996, submit your comic morsels of up to 250 words to Anecdote Contest, c/o Howard J. Bennett, MD, Humor in Medicine Editor, 2820 McKinley Place, NW, Washington, DC 20015. Be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Submissions may be abridged or edited in accordance with *JFP* style. Accepted anecdotes will appear in future issues of *JFP*. If your entry is among the top five, you will receive a free copy of the 2nd edition of Dr Bennett's book *The Best of Medical Humor*.