



***MCAT Strategy Session:  
Critical Analysis and Reasoning***

## Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Passage 1 (Questions 1-5)

While the central otherworldly concerns of the Taoist religion have led some commentators to assert that Taoism is a religion “without religious texts”, nothing could be further from the truth. The key texts of Taoism may lack the same coherence and historicity of the Talmud or the Qur’an, but there are nonetheless various works that have profound influence, and no small authority among nearly all Taoist sects.

It goes without saying that the Tao Te Ching is the central work of all Taoist religion. Despite two and a half millennia of debate over its origins, authorship, and date of origin, it remains the foundational work of Taoist philosophy and a central component of Taoist ritual. So important is this work that even commentaries on it (themselves many hundreds of years old) have become important religious texts themselves.

If the Tao Te Ching lays down the foundational ideas of Tao and Te themselves, the practical application of these ideas in life is more fully explored in the Zhuangzi and the I Ching. The Zhuangzi, much like the Tao Te Ching, has an ancient origin (ca. 400 AD) shrouded in no small amount of legend. Supposedly written partly by Zhuangzi himself and later expanded by his disciples, the work eschews the abstract poetry of the Tao Te Ching. Instead, it uses more down-to-earth parables and short dialogues to help readers bring their lives into alignment with the concept of tzu-jan, or naturalness, in their daily lives. It also encourages following the Tao of the elements.

Unlike the Zhuangzi, or any other Taoist text, the I Ching predates the Tao Te Ching by centuries. The system of fortune-telling described in the I Ching dates to somewhere in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The I Ching is meant to guide practitioners in choosing right action based on some understanding of the current situation and the future. Early in Taoist development, Taoist scholars adopted the I Ching as their own and advocated it as a central text through which one could meditate on the right way. The cosmological notions at the foundation of the I Ching became so intermingled with Taoist cosmology and Yinyangism over time that by the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was no meaningful distinction for most practitioners.

Finally, in addition to these three core texts, scholars in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. attempted to collate all major texts, commentaries, manuscripts, and apologies into a single collection. This work came to be known as the Tao Tsang, typically translated as “Treasury of Tao” or “Taoist Canon”. The Tao Tsang was collected and re-collected many times over the centuries but scholars generally recognize four major Tao Tsangs. The first, compiled circa 400 AD consisted of a bit more than a thousand scrolls and developed the tripartite division that would remain through future efforts. The second and third Tao Tsangs expanded the collection to nearly 5000 separate scrolls and the fourth and final Tao Tsang of 1444 in the Ming Dynasty settled the compilation at just under 5300 works.

The Tao Tsang (all four major compilations) divides its constituent works into three broad categories, typically termed “grottoes” each of which is split into a dozen chapters. The three grottoes are concerned with meditation, rituals, and exorcisms, with meditation always considered the highest and most pure set of writings. When someone is working to be initiated as a Taoist master, the grotto of meditation includes the writings used in the final phase of training.

1. Which of the following best characterizes the author's attitude towards the position the Tao Te Ching holds among Taoist texts?

- A) Assurance of its foremost position
- B) Tentative belief of its status as the least important text
- C) Studied agnosticism about its relative position
- D) Ignorance about how it relates to other texts

2. Suppose archaeologists discover a previously unknown text that discusses Taoist themes and advocates for the practice of Taoist rituals. The author would be *least* likely to believe which of the following about this text?

- A) Such a text would have been incorporated into the Tao Tsang if the compilers had known of it.
- B) The text may have been written at about the same time as the I Ching.
- C) Any discussion of cosmology included in the new text may have significant overlap with important themes of the I Ching and Yinyangism.
- D) It may have been considered an important religious text in its own right if it were an influential commentary on the Tao Te Ching.

3. The author asserts that the major difference between the Tao Te Ching and the Zhuangzi is that the:

- A) Zhuangzi attempts to show how to apply Taoist concepts in daily life by using short, abstract poems.
- B) Tao Te Ching developed after the Zhuangzi as a distillation of the core concepts of Tao and Te expressed in the Zhuangzi.
- C) Zhuangzi attempts to be more practical, both in its subject-matter and in its style.
- D) Tao Te Ching requires its readers to have fully contemplated the works of the meditation grotto for full appreciation.

4. Which of the following would most *weaken* one of the author's central arguments?

- A) In several major schools of Taoist teaching, the grotto of meditation is taught as the middle grotto in the progression towards becoming a master, with the final grotto being the grotto of rituals.
- B) The parables presented by the Zhuangzi are held as infallible representations of the Tao in action in daily life, and questioning the core truth of these stories is typically punished by banishment from the community.
- C) During Taoist ceremonies, the priest's copy of the Tao Te Ching is treated reverently, placed on a special dais between readings, with only the priest being permitted to touch the book.
- D) Despite the existence of many works that discuss Taoist themes, the texts themselves are not seen as sacred by most Taoists and the ideas expressed in these works are taken as general guidance that can be disregarded by any local priest or follower of the religion.

5. According to the passage, which of the following can be inferred regarding Taoist religious texts?

- I. The Tao Te Ching lacks the historicity of the Qur'an.
- II. The authorship and structure of the Zhuangzi, unlike the Tao Te Ching, has been clearly established by historians.
- III. The Tao Tsang lacks the coherence of the Talmud.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) I and III only
- D) I, II and III

## Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Passage 2 (Questions 6-10)

If a drug company could take all of the positive effects of exercise and put them into a pill, they'd be the most successful company in history. It is, in fact, nearly impossible to overstate the positive effects that regular exercise has on nearly every facet of the body's physiological and the mind's psychological state. Exercise has been demonstrated to not just slow the progression of, but to reverse, many of the symptoms of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, and hypertension. It can delay the onset of dementia, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression disorders, and aid in smoking cessation programs.

And yet when patients meet with their physicians, the overwhelming majority of primary care doctors fail to discuss the importance of exercise with patients. To the extent that the topic is discussed at all, the doctor will make, at best, passing remarks about the importance of an exercise program. Even more perversely, there is a strong correlation between lower economic class and decreased likelihood of physician-recommended exercise programs, despite the even stronger correlation between lower economic class and many of the diseases that exercise would most directly benefit (most notably obesity and type 2 diabetes). That is to say, those patients who most need regular exercise are the ones least likely to have a doctor that strongly recommends such a program.

Why this connection exists is still somewhat unclear, although research is slowly shedding light on the topic. Fundamentally, public health scientists examine two different facets of the correlation: patient-sided factors and healthcare provider-sided factors. Thus, working and lower class patients may not have access to the kind of doctors that will recommend exercise, or doctors may change how they treat patients based on perceived economic class.

To date, research seems to suggest both of these factors work in concert. In a groundbreaking study at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, experimenters created audio recordings of over 5,000 patient-physician interactions for patients that were classified as obese. The patient population was categorized into three broad categories of economic class based on income. Researchers found that physicians were 22% more likely to discuss exercise regimens with the high-class patient group than the lowest, and that when exercise was discussed, doctors spent a staggering 420% more time in conversation about exercise with the high economic class group than either the middle or low class group. Despite these stark findings, the researchers' failure to control for factors of ethnicity and gender have created large enough concerns about methodological validity to lead some critics to dismiss the study entirely.

More promising are results obtained from examining the patient-sided factors, including frequency of patient-initiated discussions about exercise programs and patient access to high quality primary care. Here, surveys of both patients and healthcare workers have demonstrated a strong correlation between a patient's economic class and their likelihood of initiating a conversation about exercise with their healthcare provider. This correlation seems to exist regardless of the health status of the patient, and any similarities between the patient and provider in terms of demographic categories. The findings suggest, perhaps, that patients from higher economic classes are simply more comfortable initiating conversations with their healthcare professionals.

A final irony was revealed in the most recent major study published on the topic, which found no correlation between a patient's ability to start and stick with an exercise regimen and how frequently such programs were discussed with healthcare professionals.

6. In the study discussed in the fourth paragraph, the researchers created audio recordings of the doctor-patient interactions in order to:
- A) prove that physicians unconsciously discriminate against lower class patients by not discussing exercise with them.
  - B) determine differences in doctor-patient interactions when the doctor and patient are of the same or of different ethnicities.
  - C) ascertain whether doctors were more likely to discuss exercise regimens with obese male patients than with obese female patients.
  - D) assess both how often exercise was discussed and for how much time it was discussed.
7. Which of the following studies would provide the best evaluation of the author's speculations at the end of the fifth paragraph?
- A) A study examining how frequently patients ask physicians about medications other than the ones initially recommended by the doctor
  - B) A cross-sectional study that correlates ethnicity and gender with frequency of implementation of doctor-recommended exercise plans
  - C) A survey asking patients how many members of their immediate family are healthcare workers that specialize in exercise-based fields such as psychiatry or physical therapy
  - D) A longitudinal study that follows three different groups who are given three different doctor-prescribed exercise regimens to determine whether they are able to stick with the plan and if not, why not
8. For which of the following statements does the passage provide the *least* explanation or support?
- A) A patient with type 2 diabetes who is trying to quit smoking may be able to improve both of these health factors with regular exercise.
  - B) Patients who discuss exercise plans with their physician are unable to stick with the plan due to how infrequently they are able to get check-ups with their doctor.
  - C) Even studies that include a very large amount of data may nonetheless lead to questionable conclusions.
  - D) Patients' own behavior can influence the likelihood that their doctor will discuss exercise plans with them.
9. The passage author would be most likely to agree with which one of the following assertions?
- A) Patients in the lowest economic classes are just as likely to be able to stick with a doctor-recommended exercise plan than patients in the highest economic classes.
  - B) A female doctor is more likely to discuss an exercise regimen with an obese female patient of lower economic class than a male obese patient from a higher economic class.
  - C) The positive effects of exercise are overwhelming in the scope and profundity of effect on physiological conditions but are very limited on psychological ones.
  - D) Had the study described in paragraph 4 been conducted at a different institution the researchers would have been more likely to use more robust controls.
10. Which of the following could serve as an appropriate title for the passage?
- I. Physician-Recommended Exercise Plans: When and Why
  - II. The Benefits of Exercise in Addiction Recovery
  - III. Doctors and Patients Both Fail to Address Exercise
- A) I only
  - B) III only
  - C) I and II only
  - D) I and III only

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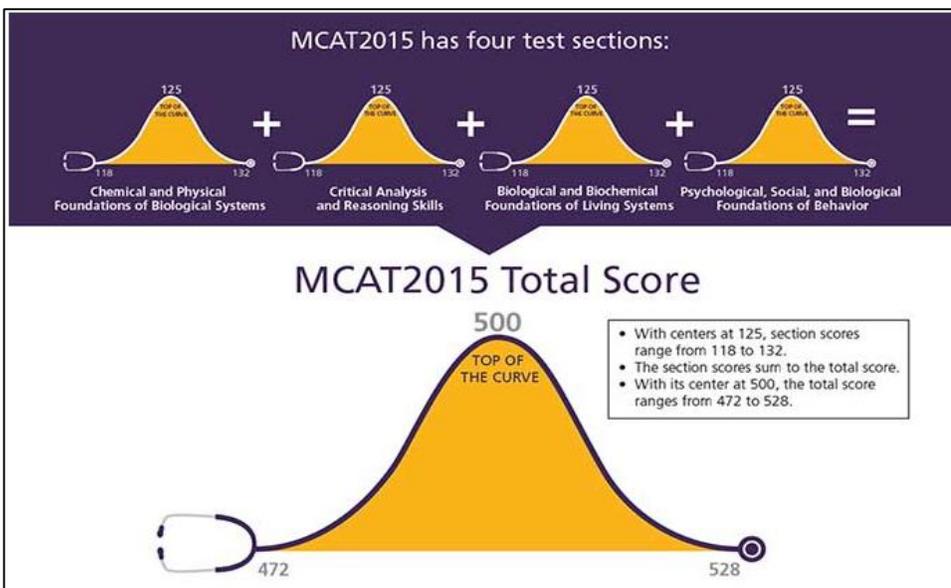
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# Answers and Explanations

## Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Passage 1 (Questions 1-5)

While the central **otherworldly concerns of the Taoist religion** have led some commentators to assert that Taoism is a **religion “without religious texts”**, nothing could be **further from the truth**. The key texts of Taoism may lack the same coherence and historicity of the **Talmud** or the **Qur’an**, but there are nonetheless various works that have profound **influence**, and no small **authority** among nearly all Taoist sects.

**Contrast: some think Taoism is a religion without religious texts, the author disagrees**

**Opinion: author concedes that Taoist texts lack the coherence and historicity of the Talmud and the Qur’an**

It goes without saying that the **Tao Te Ching is the central work** of all Taoist religion. Despite two and a half millennia of debate over its origins, authorship, and date of origin, it remains the foundational work of Taoist philosophy and a central component of Taoist ritual. So important is this work that even **commentaries on it** (themselves many hundreds of years old) **have become important religious texts** themselves.

**Opinion: author asserts that the Tao Te Ching is the central work of Taoism**

**Cause and effect: the Tao Te Ching is so important that even later works that were commentaries on it developed into being religious texts in their own right**

If the Tao Te Ching lays down the foundational ideas of Tao and Te themselves, the **practical application** of these ideas in life is more fully explored in the **Zhuangzi and the I Ching**. The Zhuangzi, much like the Tao Te Ching, has an ancient origin (ca. 400 AD) shrouded in no small amount of legend. Supposedly written partly by **Zhuangzi** himself and later expanded by his disciples, the work eschews the abstract poetry of the Tao Te Ching. Instead, it uses **more down-to-earth parables** and short dialogues to help readers bring their lives into alignment with the concept of tzu-jan, or **naturalness**, in their daily lives. It also encourages following the Tao of the elements.

**Contrast: the Tao Te Ching lays down the basic ideas and uses short abstract poetry but the Zhuangzi is more practical and uses stories**

Unlike the Zhuangzi, or any other Taoist text, **the I Ching predates** the Tao Te Ching by centuries. The system of fortune-telling described in the I Ching dates to somewhere in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The I Ching is meant to **guide practitioners in choosing right action** based on some understanding of the current situation and the future. Early in Taoist development, Taoist scholars adopted the I Ching as their own and advocated it as a central text through which one could meditate on the right way. The **cosmological notions** at the foundation of the I Ching became **so intermingled with Taoist cosmology and Yinyangism** over time that by the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was **no meaningful distinction** for most practitioners.

**Contrast: the I Ching is the one text that predates the Tao Te Ching as opposed to all other Taoist works**

**Cause and effect: the intermingled cosmologies of the Taoism, the I Ching, and Yinyangism have created a single worldview with most practitioners seeing no distinction between these three schools of thought**

Finally, in addition to these three core texts, scholars in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. attempted to **collate all major texts**, commentaries, manuscripts, and apologies into a **single collection**. This work came to be known as the **Tao Tsang**, typically translated as “Treasury of Tao” or “Taoist Canon”. The Tao Tsang was collected and re-collected many times over the centuries but scholars generally recognize four major Tao Tsangs. The first, compiled circa 400 AD consisted of a bit more than a thousand scrolls and developed the tripartite division that would remain through future efforts. The second and third Tao Tsangs expanded the collection to nearly 5000 separate scrolls and the fourth and final Tao Tsang of 1444 in the Ming Dynasty settled the compilation at just under 5300 works.

**Key terms: Tao Tsang**

**Cause and effect: the effort of scholars to collect all Taoist writings in one place led to the creation of the Tao Tsang**

The Tao Tsang (all four major compilations) divides its constituent works into **three broad categories**, typically termed “**grottoes**” each of which is split into a dozen chapters. The three grottoes are concerned with **meditation, rituals, and exorcisms**, with **meditation** always considered the **highest and most pure** set of writings. When someone is working to be initiated as a Taoist master, the grotto of meditation includes the writings used in the **final phase of training**.

**Key terms: grottoes, meditation, rituals, exorcisms**

**Contrast: the grotto of meditation is seen as higher and more pure than the others**

**Main Idea: Taoism is a religion with many religious texts, including the core works of the Tao Te Ching, the I Ching, and the Zhuangzi, and collections of lesser writings known as the Tao Tsang.**

1. Which of the following best characterizes the author's attitude towards the position the Tao Te Ching holds among Taoist texts?

- A) Assurance of its foremost position
- B) Tentative belief of its status as the least important text
- C) Studied agnosticism about its relative position
- D) Ignorance about how it relates to other texts

A is correct. The author tells us at the start of the second paragraph that it "goes without saying" that the Tao Te Ching sits as the central work among Taoist texts. If the author thinks it is so obvious that it "goes without saying" that suggests absolute assurance on his part that it is the central or foremost book.

B: This is the opposite of the real answer as the Tao Te Ching is the central text.

C, D: The author doesn't hold back on an opinion here, making agnosticism or ignorance inappropriate.

2. Suppose archaeologists discover a previously unknown text that discusses Taoist themes and advocates for the practice of Taoist rituals. The author would be *least* likely to believe which of the following about this text?

- A) Such a text would have been incorporated into the Tao Tsang if the compilers had known of it.
- B) The text may have been written at about the same time as the I Ching.
- C) Any discussion of cosmology included in the new text may have significant overlap with important themes of the I Ching and Yinyangism.
- D) It may have been considered an important religious text in its own right if it were an influential commentary on the Tao Te Ching.

B is correct. The passage tells us in the fourth paragraph that no Taoist text pre-dates the Tao Te Ching, but that the I Ching does. Thus if a new text were discovered, the author would find it exceptionally unlikely that this new text would have an origin as old as the I Ching (thus predating the Tao Te Ching).

A: This is likely to be true since the Tao Tsang was an attempt to compile all available writings.

C: The passage tells us that the cosmology of Taoism is mixed up with that of the I Ching and Yinyangism, thus this is probably true.

D: The passage tells us that influential commentaries on the Tao Te Ching were able to develop into important religious texts themselves, so it's entirely possible that this could have happened with this text.

3. The author asserts that the major difference between the Tao Te Ching and the Zhuangzi is that the:

- A) Zhuangzi attempts to show how to apply Taoist concepts in daily life by using short, abstract poems.
- B) Tao Te Ching developed after the Zhuangzi as a distillation of the core concepts of Tao and Te expressed in the Zhuangzi.
- C) Zhuangzi attempts to be more practical, both in its subject-matter and in its style.
- D) Tao Te Ching requires its readers to have fully contemplated the works of the meditation grotto for full appreciation.

C is correct. The third paragraph tells us that the Zhuangzi focuses on practical application and uses more down-to-earth styles like parables.

A: This is a distortion since it is the Tao Te Ching that uses short abstract poems.

B: This is the opposite of what the passage asserts. We're told the Tao Te Ching has been a subject of debate for "two and a half millennia" giving it an authorship date around 400-500 BC, with the Zhuangzi being written almost 800 years later around 400 AD.

D: The grottoes of the Tao Tsang were not compiled until centuries or millennia after the Tao Te Ching, so it doesn't seem reasonable that fully appreciating the Tao Te Ching could require reading through the works in the Tao Tsang.

4. Which of the following would most *weaken* one of the author's central arguments?

- A) In several major schools of Taoist teaching, the grotto of meditation is taught as the middle grotto in the progression towards becoming a master, with the final grotto being the grotto of rituals.
- B) The parables presented by the Zhuangzi are held as infallible representations of the Tao in action in daily life, and questioning the core truth of these stories is typically punished by banishment from the community.
- C) During Taoist ceremonies, the priest's copy of the Tao Te Ching is treated reverently, placed on a special dais between readings, with only the priest being permitted to touch the book.
- D) Despite the existence of many works that discuss Taoist themes, the texts themselves are not seen as sacred by most Taoists and the ideas expressed in these works are taken as general guidance that can be disregarded by any local priest or follower of the religion.

D is correct. The author starts by presenting a view he will oppose: that Taoism is a religion without religious texts. He then goes on to discuss Taoism's various religious texts at great length. However, if it were true that these works were not seen as sacred, or as having any particular authority, then that would weaken one of the author's central concerns in the passage.

A: The author only briefly discusses the three grottoes and so ideas related to them don't comprise one of the author's central arguments.

B, C: These would add to the idea that Taoism has sacred texts; that it is not a "religion without religious texts"

5. According to the passage, which of the following can be inferred regarding Taoist religious texts?

- I. The Tao Te Ching lacks the historicity of the Qur'an.
- II. The authorship and structure of the Zhuangzi, unlike the Tao Te Ching, has been clearly established by historians.
- III. The Tao Tsang lacks the coherence of the Talmud.

- A) I only
- B) II only
- C) I and III only
- D) I, II and III

C is correct. At the start of the passage, the author concedes that Taoist religious texts lack two major qualities found in other works: coherence and historicity. The author specifically cites the Qur'an and the Talmud as works that have these qualities. Thus I and III are reasonable inferences, as these Taoist texts would lack these qualities when compared to Western religious texts.

II: This is probably false, since the passage tells us that the origin of the Zhuangzi is both ancient and shrouded in mystery.

## Critical Analysis and Reasoning Skills Passage 2 (Questions 6-10)

If a drug company could take all of the positive effects of exercise and put them into a pill, they'd be the most successful company in history. It is, in fact, **nearly impossible to overstate the positive effects** that regular **exercise** has on nearly every facet of the **body's** physiological and the **mind's** psychological state. Exercise has been demonstrated to not just slow the progression of, but to reverse, many of the symptoms of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, and hypertension. It can delay the onset of dementia, reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression disorders, and aid in smoking cessation programs.

### **Cause and effect: exercise has tons of benefits for body and mind**

And yet when patients meet with their physicians, the overwhelming majority of **primary care doctors fail to discuss** the importance of **exercise** with patients. To the extent that the topic is discussed at all, the doctor will make, at best, passing remarks about the importance of an exercise program. Even more perversely, there is a strong correlation between lower economic class and decreased likelihood of physician-recommended exercise programs, despite the even stronger correlation between lower economic class and many of the diseases that exercise would most directly benefit (most notably obesity and type 2 diabetes). That is to say, **those patients who most need regular exercise** are the ones **least likely** to have a **doctor that strongly recommends** such a program.

### **Opinion: author thinks that doctors are failing to adequately discuss exercise with patients**

**Contrast: patients of lower economic class vs. patients of higher economic class – the lower economic class patients are more likely to need regular exercise but are less likely to have a doctor who pushes it**

Why this connection exists is **still somewhat unclear**, although research is slowly shedding light on the topic. Fundamentally, public health scientists examine two different facets of the correlation: **patient-sided** factors and **healthcare provider-sided** factors. Thus, working and lower class patients may not have access to the kind of doctors that will recommend exercise, or doctors may change how they treat patients based on perceived economic class.

### **Cause and effect: factors relating to both patients and doctors influence the frequency of doctor-patient discussions about exercise**

To date, research seems to suggest both of these factors work in concert. In a groundbreaking study at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, experimenters created audio recordings of over 5,000 patient-physician interactions for patients that were classified as obese. The **patient population was categorized** into three broad categories of economic class based on income. Researchers found that physicians were **22% more likely** to discuss exercise regimens with the **high-class patient group** than the lowest, and that when exercise was discussed, doctors spent a staggering **420% more time in conversation** about exercise with the high economic class group than either the middle or low class group. Despite these stark findings, the researchers' **failure to control** for factors of ethnicity and gender have created large enough concerns about methodological validity to lead **some critics to dismiss** the study entirely.

### **Contrast: doctors were more likely to discuss exercise with the rich patients and discussed exercise for much longer time with them**

**Opinion: critics dismiss the results because they think the design of the study was flawed**

**More promising are results** obtained from examining the patient-sided factors, including **frequency of patient-initiated discussions** about exercise programs and patient access to high quality primary care. Here, surveys of both patients and healthcare workers have demonstrated a **strong correlation** between a patient's **economic class** and their likelihood of **initiating a conversation** about exercise with their healthcare provider. This correlation seems to exist regardless of the health status of the patient, and any similarities between the patient and provider in terms of demographic categories. The findings suggest, perhaps, that **patients from higher economic classes** are simply **more comfortable initiating conversations** with their healthcare professionals.

### **Cause and effect: patients from higher economic classes are much more likely to initiate conversations about exercise with their doctor**

**Opinion: author speculates that the richer patients are just more comfortable starting conversations with doctors in general**

A final **irony** was revealed in the most recent major study published on the topic, which found **no correlation** between a patient's ability to start and **stick with an exercise** regimen and **how frequently such programs were discussed** with healthcare professionals.

### **Contrast: even when doctors discuss exercise more frequently with patients, that doesn't seem to have any effect on patients actually sticking with exercise plans**

**Main Idea: Exercise has huge benefits for both body and mind and yet doctors generally fail to address this important idea, and this failure is even more pronounced when looking at doctor-patient interactions for patients from lower economic classes**

6. In the study discussed in the fourth paragraph, the researchers created audio recordings of the doctor-patient interactions in order to:

- A) prove that physicians unconsciously discriminate against lower class patients by not discussing exercise with them.
- B) determine differences in doctor-patient interactions when the doctor and patient are of the same or of different ethnicities.
- C) ascertain whether doctors were more likely to discuss exercise regimens with obese male patients than with obese female patients.
- D) assess both how often exercise was discussed and for how much time it was discussed.

D is correct. The passage tells us information both about the frequency of discussions about exercise (22% more for high economic class patients) and about the duration of such conversations (420% longer conversations).

A: This goes far beyond the passage, both by saying that the researchers were setting out to “prove” a particular conclusion in advance, and that the physicians were unconsciously discriminating.

B, C: This is the opposite of what the passage says because we’re specifically told the study failed to address these factors.

7. Which of the following studies would provide the best evaluation of the author’s speculations at the end of the fifth paragraph?

- A) A study examining how frequently patients ask physicians about medications other than the ones initially recommended by the doctor
- B) A cross-sectional study that correlates ethnicity and gender with frequency of implementation of doctor-recommended exercise plans
- C) A survey asking patients how many members of their immediate family are healthcare workers that specialize in exercise-based fields such as physiatry or physical therapy
- D) A longitudinal study that follows three different groups who are given three different doctor-prescribed exercise regimens to determine whether they are able to stick with the plan and if not, why not

A is correct. The author speculates that patients in higher economic classes are simply more comfortable initiating conversations with healthcare professionals. If this is the case, we should be able to study how often patients initiate conversations on topics other than exercise regimens. Specifically initiating a conversation about alternative medications would be one such example.

B: This study would be assessing factors discussed in paragraph four, not five.

C: While someone might be more likely to initiate a conversation about exercise if they are regularly exposed to family members who are focused on the topic, this study doesn’t quite get at the issue of being comfortable initiating conversations with healthcare providers generally, as the author speculates.

D: This choice relates to the facts discussed in the sixth paragraph.

8. For which of the following statements does the passage provide the *least* explanation or support?

- A) A patient with type 2 diabetes who is trying to quit smoking may be able to improve both of these health factors with regular exercise.
- B) Patients who discuss exercise plans with their physician are unable to stick with the plan due to how infrequently they are able to get check-ups with their doctor.
- C) Even studies that include a very large amount of data may nonetheless lead to questionable conclusions.
- D) Patients’ own behavior can influence the likelihood that their doctor will discuss exercise plans with them.

B is correct. The very end of the passage tells us that even when patients do discuss exercise regimens with their doctor, they don’t seem to be able to start or stick with the plans. However, the passage doesn’t tell us (or even suggest) why this is the case.

A: This is stated at the start of the passage.

C: The author tells us about a study in paragraph 4 that included tons of data (thousands of recorded doctor-patient interactions) but still had methodological flaws that made some question its conclusions.

D: The passage discusses a study that assess how frequently patients initiate conversations about exercise with their doctors.

9. The passage author would be most likely to agree with which one of the following assertions?

A) Patients in the lowest economic classes are just as likely to be able to stick with a doctor-recommended exercise plan than patients in the highest economic classes.

B) A female doctor is more likely to discuss an exercise regimen with an obese female patient of lower economic class than a male obese patient from a higher economic class.

C) The positive effects of exercise are overwhelming in the scope and profundity of effect on physiological conditions but are very limited on psychological ones.

D) Had the study described in paragraph 4 been conducted at a different institution the researchers would have been more likely to use more robust controls.

A is correct. At the very end of the passage, the author tells us that there seems to be no correlation between how frequently doctors discuss exercise plans and whether patients will stick to such plans. Since there's no correlation, we may guess that low economic class patients (few doctor conversations about exercise) and high economic class patients (many conversations about exercise) are equally likely to be able to stick to an exercise plan.

B: This contradicts the passage, which states that doctors are more likely to discuss exercise with higher class patients.

C: This contradicts the first paragraph, which tells us that exercise helps both mind and body.

D: Nowhere does the author state or suggest anything about the particular institutions that are carrying out the studies in the passage.

10. Which of the following could serve as an appropriate title for the passage?

I. Physician-Recommended Exercise Plans: When and Why

II. The Benefits of Exercise in Addiction Recovery

III. Doctors and Patients Both Fail to Address Exercise

A) I only

B) III only

C) I and II only

D) I and III only

D is correct. The passage is concerned with exercise plans recommended by doctors, and the various factors that influence when such discussions take place. The author discusses studies that address the behavior of both the patients and the healthcare professionals. Thus I and III both adequately sum up the general discussion in the text.

II: This is only mentioned briefly in the first paragraph and wouldn't serve as a good title summing up the whole passage.