

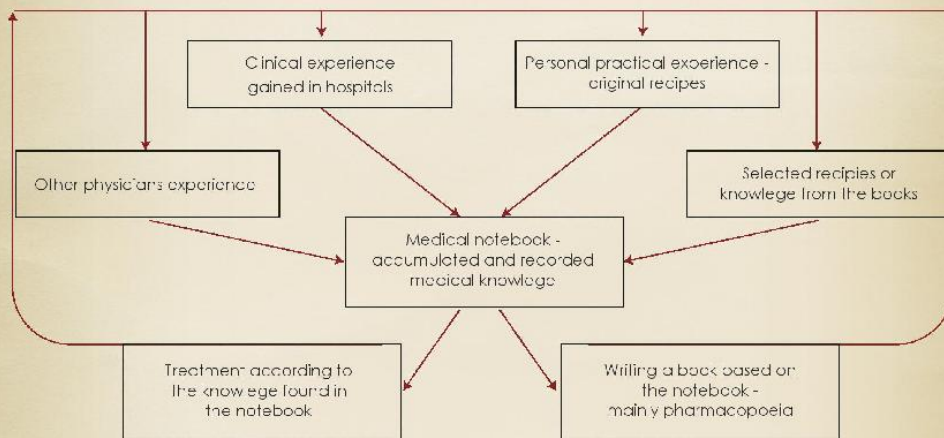
# Notebooks of Jewish Practitioners

Notebooks have been in use in a number of ways since Classical times. Notebooks were a humanistic method of storing information including realia, medical synonyms and recipes, for easy access. The medical notebooks found in the Cairo Genizah (70) comprise a unique source of historical data for a better understanding of the ways in which medieval medical knowledge in Egypt was transferred from theory to practice and vice versa. These documents provide the most direct evidence we have for preferred practical medical recipes because they record the choices of medical practitioners in Medieval Cairo. Since the language most commonly used in them was Judaeo-Arabic, they were evidently written by Jews.



Hebrew ophthalmologic notebook

## Practical medical notebooks diagram



The medical genre in the notebooks was primarily pharmacopoeic, consisting of apparently original recipes for the treatment of various diseases. There are also a few notebooks on *materia medica*. The subject matter of the Genizah medical notebooks shows that they were mostly of an eclectic nature, i.e. the writers had probably learnt about these treatments and recipes from their teachers, applied them at the hospitals where they worked, or copied them from the books they read. Foremost among the subjects dealt with were eye diseases, followed by skin diseases, coughs and colds, dentistry and oral hygiene, and gynaecological conditions. The writers of the Genizah notebooks apparently recorded the practical medical knowledge they wished to preserve for their future use as amateur physicians, students, traditional healers, or professional practitioners.



Medical notebook written in Arabic



Judaeo-Arabic pharmacopoeic notebook