Depression – A Case Study

John is a farmer. He has recently been diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder.

John raises sheep on a medium-sized farm in Northumberland. He also makes some of his income from a farm shop and a campsite on his land, and lets out a small field for horses to be kept in. Although he does not keep cattle, he was hit badly by the foot-and-mouth crisis of 2001 because of the impact it had on tourism. During the crisis he had to borrow heavily to survive, and now that interest rates are rising, he is finding it difficult to make his repayments.

John's depression has been steadily worsening for some years, but he has only recently been to see his GP and been diagnosed with the disorder. During his consultation, it emerged that John's symptoms often worsen during and immediately after sheep dipping season.

John has always been known for being 'a bit of a moody type'. His father and grandfather were known in the local areas for their periods of melancholy and low mood, and his great uncle committed suicide some years ago. However, after three months, John is responding well to antidepressant medication. Although he is not happy all the time, his mood has stabilised and he no longer feels as bad as he did prior to consulting his GP.

What you need to do…

Using the case study above and the information provided, identify the factors in John's life that, according to the medical model, could be contributing to his depressed symptoms. Then…

Either:

- Write an account of John's symptoms from the biological point of view, explaining possible reasons why he might have developed a depressive disorder.

Or:

- Draw a mind-map identifying possible biological causes of John's depression.

Remember the rules for drawing mind maps: **key words** and phrases only, and you must write **along** the lines.