Structural Cloze

Jumping Frenchmen of Maine

The Jumping Frenchmen of Maine condition isn’t something you’d expect from the doctor’s. But this is, in fact, a real neurological disease. At least this one has an interesting and pronounceable name! The following passage is recommended for Primary 4.

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One of the strangest diseases in the world is called the “Jumping Frenchmen of Maine Condition”. It has 1________ doctors and scientists for more than a century.

This disease was first 2________ in the year 1878, by a man named George Miller Beard. Mr. Beard lived in the northern parts of Maine, a state in America. One of the common 3________ in this area was that of lumberjack. These were men who cut down trees for wood.

Mr. Beard noticed that, while lumberjacks were 4________ strong and tough, they were easy to scare:

“Whenver something startles them,” he wrote in a letter to his cousin, “they are seen to make a mighty leap, and cry out as if they were women in distress.”

The lumberjacks were 5________ by things that were quite harmless. Rustling bushes caused by lizards, the sudden flutter of a bird’s wings, or even a 6________ deer would set them off: They would jump straight up, and give a piercing scream.

But this was not the only strange thing about them. It was discovered that, when the lumberjacks were startled, they would obey any 7________ given to them. If you told them to lie down or clap their hands while they were startled, they would do it without hesitation.

Some of the lumberjacks also 8________ from echolalia. This is the habit of uncontrollably repeating words that are said to them.

Once news got out about this, 9________ doctors and scientists arrived to investigate. They discovered that the disease was only found in Maine, and that it mostly 10________ the families of lumberjacks. Some doctors thus believe the disease is passed down from parent to child, much like diabetes or asthma.
Until today, no one is certain why the disease has its strange effects.

Answer Key:

1 - (B) puzzled
2 - (L) noticed
3 - (H) professions
4 - (A) physically
5 - (F) startled
6 - (N) scampering
7 - (M) instruction
8 - (C) suffered
9 - (O) curious
10 - (I) affected

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