

From Autonomous Professional to Accountable Practitioner



What does it mean to be a professional

in the 21st Century?



“We will put you on a pedestal, treat you like heroes/warriors/Gods in exchange for you fighting the nasty enemy called disease and protecting us from what we fear most - death

Doctors accepted they would work 80-100 hours a week (at the expense of personal and family lives) to fight against disease – in exchange they have been lauded, listened to, obeyed and never challenged”

Patrick Pietroni, GALE Memorial Lecture



Societal changes

- Loss of professional status and authority
- Impact not only on doctors but teachers, solicitors, university professors...
- Rise of market forces and consumerism
- Complexity of modern society - one profession alone cannot solve healthcare problems

Why is morale low in UK doctors?

- Doctors are losing their voice - disenfranchised and disempowered
- Resources are inconsistent with demands
- Constant change - imposed from above
- Less respect from the public and the politicians
- Not enough time to offer quality service
- Professional autonomy being eroded

Dr Elisabeth Paice, Dean Director of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education, University of London, Cuba 2001

The contract: the patient's view

- Modern medicine can do remarkable things: it can solve many of my problems
- You, the doctor, can see inside me and know what's wrong
- You know everything it's necessary to know
- You can solve my problems, even my social problems
- So we give you high status and a good salary

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The contract: the doctor's view

- Modern medicine has limited powers. Worse, it's dangerous
- We can't begin to solve all problems, especially social ones
- I don't know everything, but I do know how difficult many things are
- The balance between doing good and harm is very fine
- I'd better keep quiet about all this so as not to disappoint my patients and lose my status

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The new contract both patients and doctors know

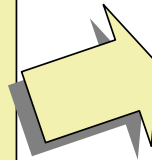
- Death, sickness, and pain are part of life
- Medicine has limited powers, particularly to solve social problems, and is risky
- Doctors don't know everything: they need decision making and psychological support
- We're in this together
- Patients can't leave problems to doctors
- Doctors should be open about their limitations
- Politicians should refrain from extravagant promises and concentrate on reality

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Direction of Travel

Autonomous professional

- clinical freedom
- commitment to individual patient
- collaboration with other professionals
- self-directed learning
- self-regulation

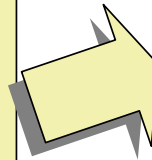


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Accountable practitioner

- clinical governance
- service to population
- multi-professional teamwork
- learning aligned to organisational needs
- external regulation

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