

A Typical Sunday

I awake at 05.00am. The security guard peers round the door of my consultation room and dazzles my tired eyes with his torch. "Time to start your extended hours morning surgery doc!" he says cheerfully. I get out of my chair and look in the mirror by the sink – I really need to do something about those bags – I must remember to visit the surgery down the road, they're offering free botox with every third attendance these days. Anyway, a quick splash of water in my face refreshes me.

I throw the half empty take-away cartons into the clinical waste bin. The Care Quality Commission will probably have something to say about that, but it's nothing that a few triplicate forms won't sort out next week. I straighten my Primark tie and try to look a bit more presentable. It's a constant struggle these days since the GPC agreed to an additional patient experience indicator in last year's QOF. Just to remind you, PE 143 is the percentage of doctors in the surgery that have shiny shoes. I may have to exception report myself this year if we are to meet the difficult 90% threshold.

I start the extended hours surgery. I finish at 10.00am and my score is: 12 DNAs, 3 sore throats, an ingrowing toe nail, two moles that had been there for years and a little old lady with barn-door metastatic breast cancer, ascites and jaundice who had just popped in whilst she was out shopping. I hope that answers the detractors to these extended hours surgeries. I admit her after a protracted phone call with the Co-ordinating Team Leader in Emergency Admissions (Medical) Nurse Practitioner at the District General. I was afraid I was going to have to pull rank on her, but she relented when I told her we've got a post going vacant for an Advanced Nurse Practitioner at our place. I log on to the doctors forums and find 27 new threads – I just don't know where they all find the time to post on the site.

I look up on Streetmap about where I have to go next. It's a routine visit for a three monthly health check to a 26 year old investment banker across town. He lives in a spacious canal side apartment that's only 32 miles away, so with any luck I'll be back for lunchtime. I hope it goes better this time and he might even let me keep my shoes on.

I'm just about to leave the surgery and lock up when my receptionist finally turns up for work. She says she won't come to work in the dark and is really afraid of lone-working. I say to her, well I'm here aren't I, but she tells me that that's the problem. I ignore her and leave for my visit.

Well, the health check turned out better than I had hoped. I even managed to park in the patient's parking spot as his wife had taken the 944 Turbo out to do some shopping. Reassuringly, the examination and everything proved to be perfectly normal and the chap even said that he would contemplate filling out this year's 29-page National Patient Survey questionnaire if he got one in the post. I thank him and leave.

I drive back into town and stop by Greggs for a pasty. It's so good that, as well as general practice, other institutions are embracing the 24-7 open all hours complete availability culture that's been promoted so conveniently by the government. I sit on a quiet bench and tuck in. Suddenly some old bloke clutching the Daily Mail starts shouting at me and without warning he tries to hit me around the head with his newspaper. Although I am caught by surprise, I manage to throw the remains of my pasty at him, whilst shouting "cancer cancer". As he ducks to avoid my impromptu missile, I manage to make my escape.

I get back to surgery to try and get some paperwork done, before starting the extended hours evening surgery. I'm a bit distracted and log on to the forums and find 14 new threads in the Share Your Views with the Media forum. I rate a few scatological sounding posts before logging off.

The paperwork is getting worse. I prepare some of the documents for this year's multisource feedback. I'm really not looking forward to it this time since I wrote on my senior partner's 360 degree form last year that she was a lazy cow who was clearly after the medical directorship at the PCT. I'll have to remind myself to disguise my handwriting better.

My computer dings, it's an email from the chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners on the nhs.net. It's so nice to get personally addressed correspondence from him on a regular basis. In an age where GPs are much more isolated, it's great that my elected representative can spend the time letting us know which politicians he's had lunch with and what he's generally up to these days. I read it and put it in the trash, along with the 203 other emails from my other friend the Chief Medical Officer.

I concentrate on allocating the appropriate number of credits to my courses and personal learning this year. It's proving rather difficult, so I use a random number generator on the internet and fill it out. I retrieve a jar of sputum and a soiled nappy from the clinical waste bin and ram them into a document folder marked 'Thanks from patients'. That's my appraisal sorted out then. That reminds me, I must remember to post the £3,000 cheque to the GMC for my revalidation/relicensing fee tomorrow.

Next, it's a look through the paperwork about the new LES the practice is getting involved with. Apparently we have to write to all patients under the age of 95 and offer them a Chlamydia screen. Either that or put them on a palliative care register, I can't remember which. I just sign on the dotted line to say we agree to do it anyway, because you know, every little bit helps.

I ring up and ask my receptionist for a hot drink but she refuses to bring it to me, citing health and safety regulations and something about a person specification. I must have a word with the practice manager tomorrow. I log on to forums and find 19 new threads on the government's latest initiatives in general practice. I make some top quality postings and then leave the forums.

Before I know it, it's 4.00pm and time to start the extended hours evening surgery. At the end of the 4 hour stint my score is: 8 DNAs, two arrived late because they missed the park and ride bus from the shopping centre, 1 headlice, 2 earaches, 3 verrucas, 5 repeat prescription requests, 4 sicknotes, a flaky scalp and a housing letter.

I slurp the scum off my now cold milky coffee and reflect. Two minutes later my take away arrives. The local Indian gives me a great discount these days, and so they should, I'm ordering most nights. I'm enjoying my Jalfrezi just as the phone rings. It's my wife. She's letting me know the divorce papers have come through, and will I come round tomorrow evening to sign the papers. I say it could be dicey as I've got the new Patient Participation Customer Focus Group to attend, but I reassure her that I will try my best. Anyway, it might be nice to see the kids this month.

It's 10.00pm, and time to bed down. I shuffle around in my swivel chair and get comfortable. As my eyes become heavy, I think to myself, gosh this is the life...

GMC Thought Police – this is what is known as a Parody and bears no resemblance to anything that has ever happened, is happening or will ever happen in the future. I think.