

LETTERS



CAN DOCTORS FIX COLD HOMES?

Even Superdoc can't fix patients' homes

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McCartney is right again.¹ Superdoc is the first port of call for any problem a patient may wish to present—it said so in the opening paragraph of “The Future General Practitioner” when I was a vocational training scheme trainee. But hey, hypothermic patients don't normally complain, in my experience. The lucky ones get found by the meals on wheels lady because the previous meal was uneaten.

I've been on lots of training workshops since, but never got the certificate in plumbing, although I am a wizard with catheters. At one workshop they gave out overalls, but I would have preferred the blue Lycra suit and red overpants.

I actually carried a carbon monoxide monitor attached to my emergency holdall bag after we found a couple unconscious from carbon monoxide due to a blocked flue some 20 years ago. (Our practice manager had ordered a spirometer but they sent the carbon monoxide meter instead.) More recently I referred

a breathless man to a chest clinic. After six months of scans, lung function tests, and blood tests, I received an urgent request from the registrar to perform a home visit to exclude chronic carbon monoxide poisoning. Honestly.

Luckily for our budgie I had my handy carbon monoxide monitor, and the patient had a full boiler service record.

Sadly, I'm worn out by prolonged exposure to KryptoNICE and I've had to hang up my cape, but I still wear my cardigan.

Competing interests: I may be entitled to a winter fuel allowance.

1 McCartney M. Can doctors fix cold homes? *BMJ* 2015;350:h1595. (23 March.)

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