

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ Confidential

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Nothing divides doctors more than politics. But sometimes unlikely bedfellows emerge. You might think that Iona Heath, former leader of UK GPs, whose politics have always been on the left, would have nothing in common with Mike Dixon, one of the cheerleaders of the UK's Health and Social Care Act, whose politics have been further to the right. But you would be wrong. They both think that every doctor should be made to read *A Fortunate Man* by John Berger.

Similarly, you might imagine that Max Pemberton, the 34 year old medical columnist of *The Daily Telegraph* and scourge of the establishment, would share few opinions with Sir Michael Rawlins, the 72 year old former chairman of NICE and doyen of the medical fraternity. But again you would be mistaken. They both think Frank Dobson was the best health secretary in their lifetime. Admittedly, Rawlins was influenced by the fact that Dobson set up NICE and appointed him its first chair, but nevertheless there is common ground between them.

How do I know this? Because the *BMJ* has been quizzing doctors about their hopes, fears, worst mistakes, biggest inspirations, and numerous other matters over the past few months. And we are publishing the first results this week (doi:10.1136/bmj.f6192).

In the forthcoming series, called BMJ Confidential, you will discover who thinks "the perverse effects of filthy lucre" should be taken out of the NHS, who was happiest on 26 May 1989 (Liverpool 0; Arsenal 2), and who would spend £1m on getting a man pregnant.

You will not be surprised to learn, however, that one common theme emerges: a passion for medicine. We found the replies inspiring, and we hope you do too. We start this week with Clare Gerada, and would be delighted if readers would tell us which

doctors they would like to hear from—all suggestions to kowens@bmj.com.

Elsewhere in the journal, Sebastian Brandner, of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, and colleagues, reveal the alarming news that the abnormal prion protein responsible for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease may be present in 1 in 2000 of the UK population (doi:10.1136/bmj.f5675). A study of 32 000 appendixes removed in England between 2000 and 2012, at 41 hospitals, found 16 samples positive for abnormal prion protein. The authors stress that the number of patients with clinical vCJD is still well below the number suggested by the prevalence of the abnormal protein. But they say it is necessary to continue research into tests to detect abnormal prion protein in blood and to examine tissue from the 1970s and earlier.

Lastly, the editors of the *BMJ*, *Heart*, *Thorax*, and *BMJ Open* announce in a joint editorial that they will no longer consider for publication any study that is partly or wholly funded by the tobacco industry (doi:10.1136/bmj.f5193).

They recall that, back in 2003, the editor of the *BMJ* defended publication of a study with tobacco industry funding saying "The *BMJ* is passionately antitobacco, but we are also passionately prodebate and proscience. A ban would be antiscience." But 10 years on, as yet more evidence has emerged of bad faith from the tobacco industry, the editors of the *BMJ* and its sister journals now believe it is "time to cease supporting the now discredited notion that tobacco industry funded research is just like any other research."

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2013;347:f6213

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