



# CAREERS

## Role model: Mahmood Adil

The medical director at NHS National Services Scotland, talks to **Jacqui Wise** about how tomorrow's doctors need to move from stethoscope to "datascope"

Jacqui Wise

Mahmood Adil is responsible for health intelligence and protection across Scotland. "We collect an enormous amount of data in the NHS," he says. "The challenge is to change all this data into actionable intelligence." Data intelligence, he says, can be used to improve outcomes. "To add life to years, and years to life," as he puts it.

Adil's mission is to improve doctors' applied health data skills and he is working with three royal colleges in Scotland to achieve this. "The future clinical workforce needs to have a new set of skills—health system leadership, digital medicine, and preventive medicine," he says. "The time has come to move from the stethoscope to the datascope which underpins all three."

While Adil is enthusiastic about the benefits of health data, he recognises, however, that there are risks. "Information governance is key," he says. "We have to be vigilant with people's data."

Adil completed his first medical degree at King Edward Medical University, Pakistan, before moving to Glasgow to start a master's in public health. He says he adjusted to the move well. "The only thing that bothered me was the cold weather—but it was well compensated by a warm welcome from my Scottish colleagues."

After postgraduate training in paediatrics and public health medicine, Adil worked in an impressive range of roles in England, Scotland, and the US. While head of health protection for England's north west region he led the NHS health and emergency services for the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games. Based on this experience he went on to advise the London 2012 Olympics games.

In 2007 Adil helped to establish the Care Quality Commission—which replaced the three previous regulators—creating a regulatory model that he's keen to see replicated internationally.

While working as national quality, innovation, and efficiency adviser at the Department of Health in England, Adil brought

together doctors and finance managers. And he stresses the importance of building bridges between professionals so that resources can be used effectively.

Adil says that he's had excellent mentors over the years including Rafik Gardee, the late Sandy Macara, Liam Donaldson, and many more. In turn he says he hopes to "lead by action and inspire others to dream more, do more, and become more."

A keen cricketer since university, Adil still plays whenever he can. "Some of the skills I learnt as a wicket keeper captain are transferable to my job—for example, the importance of a good strategy and bringing the best out of your players to achieve the desired outcome at crunch time."

### Nominated by Joy Ngai

I had the rare opportunity of spending a year as a Scottish clinical leadership fellow with Professor Adil, who became a great role model for my development in health intelligence and leadership.

All of us would like to think we have a good understanding of data in the health service but seeing clinical data in practice is a completely different thing. Mahmood, with his national responsibility, has a passion for improving health and social care outcomes and demonstrates a clear vision for using data intelligence for that purpose.

He has a unique ability to provide both clarity and challenge to guide clinicians as they negotiate their working relationships with routinely collected data, while compassionately reminding everyone that behind every data point lies a story. He sees health data skills, which he encouraged me to develop, as a core competency for future clinical workforce. Furthermore, he gives those who spend time with him the confidence that their skills and abilities can improve the NHS for better.

Joy Ngai is a specialty trainee, NHS Education for Scotland

Nominate a role model: To nominate someone who has been a role model during your medical career, send their name, job title, and the reason for your nomination to [arimmer@bmj.com](mailto:arimmer@bmj.com)

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