



Sixty seconds on . . . the clap

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The BMJ

Gonorrhoea?

Ah ha, got you! No, I'm talking about the weekly "clap for our carers" that has seen the public standing on their doorsteps each Thursday for the past 10 weeks, clapping in support of NHS and frontline workers.

How did it start?

Dutch Londoner Annemarie Plas is the woman credited with launching the initiative. She was inspired by people in other countries showing their gratitude for key workers through mass applause.¹

And there's a weekly encore?

There has been. The first clap took place on 26 March and at 8 pm every Thursday since then people have been clapping. Plas decided, however, that the tenth week of clapping, on 28 May, should be the last.²

Did doctors applaud our efforts?

Reactions to the nation's clapping have been mixed. While some welcomed the public's show of appreciation, others have pointed out that proper protective equipment for doctors and funding for the NHS would be more appreciated.³

So, cash not claps?

Well, better pay maybe. On Twitter, emergency department doctor Rob Galloway highlighted the stagnation in nurses' wages, commenting, "remember clapping won't solve this."⁴ Meanwhile a specialist registrar tweeted,⁵ "Pay healthcare staff

better, improve their conditions, fund the NHS. Clapping is an empty gesture."

Any other matters taken in hand?

Yes, some doctors have commented that there might be a more appropriate way to remember those healthcare workers who had lost their lives to covid-19. Consultant psychiatrist JS Bamrah tweeted, "I'd rather have a minute's silence than clap. Painful to see so many friends and colleagues ravaged by the virus."

Dare I mention the other "C" word?

Let's just say that the end of the clapping may well be timed. As intensive care medic Chris Danbury, referring to government support for Dominic Cummings, put it on Twitter,⁶ "Utterly appalling hypocrisy. Do you think that clapping for my colleagues and me makes this behaviour acceptable to us? It doesn't. We have gone through so much."

- 1 Clap for our carers. <https://clapforourcarers.co.uk>.
- 2 Coronavirus: Clap for Carers should end, says founder. BBC News. 22 May 2020. www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52773032.
- 3 Barham-Brown H. 28 May 2020. <https://twitter.com/HannahPopsy/status/1265930839902257152>.
- 4 Galloway R. 22 May 2020. <https://twitter.com/DrRobgalloway/status/1263918494812442624>.
- 5 ClinOncDoc. 22 May 2020. <https://twitter.com/ClinOncDoc/status/1263854500126867456>.
- 6 Danbury C. 23 May 2020. https://twitter.com/Medic_Mediator/status/1264214560728403981.

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