

– patients and their carers, public opinion, the press that feeds off it, politicians that react to it, professional bodies and their regulations, the training requirements of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board and Modernising Medical Careers, primary care trusts and other management, and the pharmaceutical industry. Lest they disintegrate in mind, body and spirit, doctors would do well to align themselves with their most natural allies – patients and carers.

In which case, far from showering his doctors with qualities that might best suit them, the modern Hutchison should ask what the patient might require of the doctor in the therapeutic relationship. This would certainly include humanity – the ability to see the patient as an individual rather than a bundle of symptoms. It would include humility – the willingness to share power in the relationship, helping patients to decide for themselves what feels best for their life. And it would also include honesty – the readiness to give patients all the information necessary to make such decisions.

Humanity, humility and honesty: all of which together make up that mysterious quality of wisdom that is so hard to define but which is part of medicine's current search for a more spiritual professionalism – the 'care of souls' (Williams, 2005). I have no idea what wisdom is. It certainly does not come with experience, since we have all met consultants who have never acquired it in a lifetime of practice and

junior doctors who are already wise beyond their years. It may well include that self-awareness that Kelly & Feeney point out is so conspicuously missing from Hutchison's list.

What I am sure about is that wisdom is an essential part of what the good-enough psychiatrist needs to know. And that specialist adviser who wrote to me a decade ago should not have been so coy in asking for it.

Declaration of interest

None.

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CORRIGENDUM

Nathan, J. (2006) Self-harm: a strategy for survival and nodal point of change. *APT*, **12**, 329–337.

The first sentence of the article should read:

A significant proportion of people with borderline personality disorder engage in serious acts of self-harm and it is therefore considered a core feature of the disorder (Bateman & Tyrer, 2004b).