

A few months ago I accompanied my mother to an outpatient appointment and, as usual, I asked various pertinent questions of the consultant to ensure I was clear about her follow-up and actions required.

Unfortunately, my attitude to clarity, accuracy and planning wasn't shared, and I have just spent the past week discovering a trail of misinformation that has resulted in my mother having to be referred back to the consultant. My frustration is without limit.

I am sharing this with you because, as a profession, we understand the need for clear, well-communicated messages; a good unambiguous instruction or statement means we all know where we stand and can act or plan accordingly. I was, therefore, very pleased with the rewrite of the Institute's guidance on communicating results; it covers every eventuality and provides good, clear advice. It is a pity that our attention to detail wasn't mirrored in the aforementioned outpatient encounter.

This leads me on to the results of an exercise undertaken by the executive team at the Institute that consisted of a personality test and team role feedback. As with any team, we are a mixture of personalities and our strength is in our complementary differences. What was so striking is that I share my "type" with my closest colleagues and we apparently operate with a biomedical scientist "group mindset". The attributes we possess

SCIENTISTS DELIVER



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include "considerable analytical and problem solving skills", "an affinity for accuracy and maintaining high standards" and "favouring practical action". Sound familiar?

I think the various management boards in our hospitals and trusts are missing out on what biomedical scientists have to offer beyond the door of the laboratory. I believe that we share certain professional characteristics and, while we may not all be the best "baby-kissers", and were not showcased as health service heroes in the NHS 70th birthday celebrations, we possess skills that are essential to planning and delivering sound strategies. In fact, if Govia Thameslink employed biomedical scientists among its planning staff, it's possible the service problems

that have been associated with the revised train timetables could have been anticipated and avoidance actions built into the plans.

Now there is something else I would like to share with you: apparently I have a tendency to catastrophise. Yes, I can spot a potential disaster a mile off and extrapolate that potential to any one of a number of ghastly outcomes unless I take appropriate preventative action. Perhaps I'd better give Govia Thameslink a call...

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