

THIS IS GOING TO HURT

- 1 In 2010, after six years of training and a further six years on the wards,
2 I resigned from my job as a junior doctor. My parents still haven't forgiven me.
- 3 Last year, the General Medical Council wrote to me to say they were taking my
4 name off the medical register. It wasn't exactly a huge shock, as I hadn't
5 practised medicine in half a decade,* but I found it a big deal on an emotional
6 level to permanently close this chapter of my life.
- 7 It was, however, excellent news for my spare room, as I cleared out box after
8 box of old paperwork, shredding files faster than Jimmy Carr's accountant.
9 One thing I did rescue from the jaws of death was my training portfolio. All
10 doctors are recommended to log their clinical experiences, in what's known
11 as 'reflective practice'. On looking through this portfolio for the first time in
12 years, my reflective practice seemed to involve going up to my hospital on-
13 call room and writing down anything remotely interesting that had happened
14 that day, like a medical Anne Frank (only with worse accommodation).
- 15 Among the funny and the mundane, the countless objects in orifices and the
16 petty bureaucracies, I was reminded of the brutal hours and the colossal
17 impact being a junior doctor had on my life. Reading back, it felt extreme and
18 unreasonable in terms of what was expected of me, but at the time I'd just
19 accepted it as part of the job. There were points where I wouldn't have
20 flinched if an entry read 'swam to Iceland for antenatal clinic' or 'had to eat a
21 helicopter today'.
- 22 Around the same time that I was reliving all this through my diaries, junior
23 doctors in the here and now were coming under fire from politicians. I couldn't
24 help but feel doctors were struggling to get their side of the story across
25 (probably because they were at work the whole time) and it struck me that
26 the public weren't hearing the truth about what it actually means to be a
27 doctor. Rather than shrugging my shoulders and shredding the evidence, I
28 decided I had to do something to redress the balance.
- 29 So here they are: the diaries I kept during my time in the NHS, verrucas and
30 all. What it's like working on the front line, the repercussions in my personal
31 life, and how, one terrible day, it all became too much for me. (Sorry for the
32 spoiler, but you watched Titanic knowing how that was going to play out.)
33

THIS IS GOING TO HURT

34 Along the way, I'll help you out with the medical terminology and provide a bit
35 of context about what each job involved. Unlike being a junior doctor, I won't
36 just drop you in the deep end and expect you to know exactly what you're
37 doing.

38 * A study by the Department of Health in 2006 found that the public (quite
39 reasonably) believed doctors were subject to annual appraisals. The truth
40 was, at the time, doctors could quite happily go from the day they qualified
41 until the day they retired without anyone checking they could still remem-
42 ber which end of the syringe goes into the patient. Following an inquiry into
43 the Harold Shipman case, a process of revalidation was introduced in 2012,
44 whereby doctors are now assessed every five years. You'd be nervous about
45 a lot of vehicles on the road if they only got an MOT every five years, but still,
46 better than nothing I guess.

End of text

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- 1** What have Adam's parents still not forgiven him for?
- A** Quitting his job
 - B** Learning to be a doctor
 - C** Training to be a doctor for so long
 - D** Signing up to be a doctor again
-
- 2** Why did the author quit their job?
- A** His parents didn't want him to be a doctor
 - B** He was taken off the medical register
 - C** He failed a test
 - D** It became too much for them
-
- 3** Which of the following is not true?
- A** The author's parents wish he kept being a doctor
 - B** Being a junior doctor is difficult
 - C** Doctors are tested every year
 - D** Doctors are tested every five years
-
- 4** Which of these two words describe being a junior doctor?
- A** Interesting and boring
 - B** Funny and easy
 - C** Funny and difficult
 - D** Interesting and calming
-

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

5 What does Adam think about his training portfolio diary entries?

- A** They're unimportant and long
 - B** They're important and extreme
 - C** They're confidential and funny
 - D** They're funny and confusing
-

6 What is this book going to be about?

- A** Being a doctor
 - B** Finding a new job
 - C** Studying medicine
 - D** Adam Kay's life story
-

7 What is meant by the word 'remotely' (line 13)?

- A** Far away
 - B** Distantly
 - C** Slightly
 - D** Boring
-

8 What is meant by the word 'extreme' (line 17)?

- A** Acceptable
 - B** Strange
 - C** Exciting
 - D** Intense
-