

must also be changes in the way clinicians work, in which removal of traditional professional boundaries extends the scope of clinical practice. There must be new ways of providing services, with integration of the health and care components and unifying care between community and hospital. There is also another explicit aim—to remove the inequalities in health and in health outcomes, and of access to and uptake of health care, across the nation.

There are important implications for the medical profession. The Medical Royal Colleges in the United Kingdom have set and stood by independent standards for postgraduate medical education and practice for many years. But government wishes other stakeholders to have an increasingly influential voice in medical education and training, to bring them into closer alignment with its service priorities.

Clinicians regard their service with a sense of ownership. This follows naturally—it is at once a great strength of the service and an impediment to change. Inherent in such

ownership is acceptance of accountability for practice, for service improvement, and for the reforms needed to bring about cost effective improvements for patients and for society. It is no surprise that doctors and their clinical colleagues resist change unless they see benefits for their patients, and an improvement in the standard of care. Strategies that appeal to this motivation are more likely to attract commitment than those based on control. Yet the NHS depends on the leadership of clinicians to achieve the desired changes. At the same time, clinicians have a responsibility to ensure the most effective use of limited resources.

Authorities in many countries face similar problems, each against the background of its own historical and cultural heritage. We should learn from each other how to do things better, for all our populations.

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*Old men supine on metal beds,  
White sheets and covers mauve or blue,  
Doors open wide so passing aides can view  
The resting, breathing, heavy heads.  
Next to each bed a five-toed stand  
With plastic tubing hanging loose,  
Delivering a measured dose  
Drip by drip into each hand.*

*And you, dear man, eyes softly shut,  
Cheeks sunken, bearded, grey,  
What thoughts go through your subtle mind?  
What mortal deal have you cut  
With Life to let you stay  
Or Death to let life's thread unwind?*

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