



I'm just a sense-making analyst

I can tolerate all sorts of strange sounds, including blackboard scratching and modernist orchestral music, but one sound that will get me cringing every time is the phrase 'Just a GP'. I hear it less than I used to, but the underlying idea, that our job is really quite simple, is still present. Everyone knows what a GP does, don't they? I certainly never seem to be asked at parties 'so what does that involve?' unlike a friend of mine whose business card claims he is an environmental consultant (typo as it was!). With a few honourable exceptions, as a profession, we have not managed to explain well what we do, and why we perhaps should not be replaced entirely by nurses or robots. Perhaps some new job titles would help grasp some of the complexity. I don't mean the old debate about calling ourselves family doctors or family physicians. I mean really new job titles, ones that will get people asking us interesting questions at parties. Or even ones that just get us invited to parties.

I might be an Executive (Diagnosis and Prescribing) which are certainly things I do. But what about all the consultations where there may not be a diagnosis or I'm proud of managing to avoid a drug prescription. In one online article doctors were described as 'scientist, healer, magician, business entrepreneur, small shopkeeper, or assembly line worker'. That's probably about right, though I suspect I'm a better magician than shopkeeper, frankly.

For other ideas, it's worth turning to jobs in the 'digital space,' where there is now a tradition of titles for jobs that didn't exist up until this time last week. There really are jobs out there called Knowledge Philanthropist, Sense-making Analyst, and Happiness Advocate. I'm sure I've performed all these roles in my last clinic. I've explained someone's iron levels, the possible reasons for it, and what our next decisions may be in improving her tiredness. This was just one of this week's acts of knowledge philanthropy. I am a longstanding happiness advocate and sense-making analyst for a woman who has successfully come through an awful time of abusive relationships and drugs. At other points in my week I have performed

the roles of Story Listener in Chief, Health Systems Navigator, Cultural Interpreter, Cognitive Prober And Reattribution Catalyst, and Partially Electronic Decision Support Systems Engineer. And that was just with other staff. Surely, all of these job titles are guaranteed to get surprised looks at parties, and probably everywhere else I go. Perhaps I'll need to become a Witness Without Protection or an Epistolary Epidemiologist, both jobs I should invent and put on my CV now. Sadly, there's not one of these roles that encompasses the whole of the job of general practice in one go. Given the evidence that primary care leads to an improvement in health inequalities, and the strong role for GPs in advocating for a fairer society, I end up coming nearly full circle, while fully proclaiming the moral dimension of what we do. I'm Just — a GP.

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