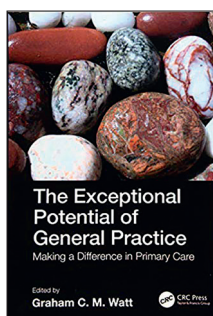


## The Exceptional Potential of General Practice: Making a Difference in Primary Care

Edited by Graham CM Watt

CRC Press, 2018, PB, 275pp, £29.99, 978-1785231582



### PARTS OF THE WHOLE

In the introduction to his new book, Graham Watt likens its contents to a 'tapas menu', best sampled in different selections rather than as a series. In serving up this menu, Watt has provided something light and refreshing but not without sustenance. The book itself serves to keep the torch of general practice burning bright and strong.

Rather than provide another overarching academic critique of the value of general practice (community-based primary medical care), Watt provides us with a more illuminating constellation of contributions from GPs at the frontline, academics, and other health professionals who are seeking, through a variety of methods, to realise the exceptional potential that high-quality general practice can provide for those who it serves. The book's opening chapters summarise some of the challenges (for example, multimorbidity, mental health, and social exclusion) that the literature describes in developing general practice services, particularly for socioeconomically deprived communities. The following chapters provide some shining examples of responses to these challenges.

Watt's telescope naturally focuses mainly on some 'stars' from his home country of Scotland, but includes others from across the world that vary from integrated health and social care projects based in general practice (the Govan Ship Project, Scotland), training programmes reaching out to excluded groups (Dublin, Ireland), examples of individual projects

setting up GP practices embedded in their communities (Belgium, Ireland, Australia), and particular centres of innovation (Tower Hamlets, England).

Throughout this constellation three large bodies of work are moving that provide the gravity to hold the book together and the explanation to how the potential might be realised. The first is the pioneering work of Julian Tudor Hart, with whom Watt worked and to whom the book is dedicated. Tudor Hart was not only decades ahead of his time in the way he developed community-based clinical practice in the village of Glyncoirwg in the 1970s, but also in his essays and vision on the potential of the NHS itself as a national institution, and how both undergraduate and postgraduate education and training might be helped to recognise this. The second is the work of Barbara Starfield, and in particular her four Cs — 'Contact (accessibility through community base), Continuity, Comprehensiveness, and Coordination'. The third is the growing Deep End General Practice movement, of which Watt was a founder member, and which is now an international network of GPs and their colleagues striving to make a difference by supporting and advocating for high-quality general practice for those communities that need it most. There is no apology for focusing on these communities, recognising Tudor Hart's 'inverse care law' and highlighting the health inequities such communities face because of political decisions about funding made elsewhere.

The book appropriately draws to its close with a chapter on education and training as it provides a useful introduction for anyone unfamiliar with this body of work. For those already engaged in similar work in whatever form, it provides a useful summary of the founding principles that underpin their efforts, some examples of work elsewhere, and a reminder that they are very much part of a whole.

#### Ben Jackson,

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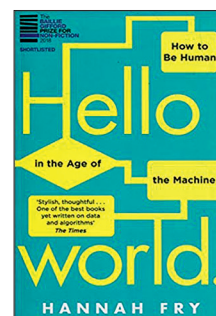
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X707609>

## Hello World: How to be Human in the Age of the Machine

Hannah Fry

Black Swan, 2019, PB, 320pp, £8.99, 978-1784163068



### AN ALGORITHMIC PAGE TURNER

I'll be the first to admit that seeing a mathematical book flop through the letterbox did not leave me jumping for joy. However, I am now slightly ashamed of my initial disheartened reaction. This book is an accessible page turner on mathematical algorithms — something I never thought I'd say. The book explores how algorithms are inherent within modern life, deeply entwined in our relationship with the digital world. As a naive GP registrar reading this, I was led to new discoveries concerning how private companies collect and harness the data of individuals.

Fry travels through a variety of hot topics in the digital world, covering everything from Facebook's political endeavours, AI in health care, to cases of false identity in criminal investigations. In one unnerving example, Fry describes a supermarket's ability to detect the chance of pregnancy from the items in a person's shopping basket, then use this data to send pregnancy- and baby-related coupons to the customer's home. Which in one poignant story led to a teen pregnancy disclosure to an unhappy granddad-to-be.

The chapter on medicine describes a competition between pathologists and machines in diagnosing tumours from pathology slides. Remarkably, the algorithm manages to diagnose 92.4% of cancers correctly but at the same time detects a large number of false positives, leading Fry to suggest that we should not be fearing that our jobs will be taken over by machines, but in fact we will be working *in* a team, collaborating to make more accurate

diagnoses.

Later in this chapter the dilemma of digital healthcare records in the NHS is raised, candidly pointing out the 'mess' of NHS data, which is common across many other countries, the US included. Fry points out the difference between the chaotic nature of digital healthcare records compared with the meticulously collected private sector data that brokers sell. This is something we will all recognise at work when trying to find out what happened during a hospital admission or find an elusive X-ray result.

I found my eyes opened to the moral and ethical dilemmas posed by algorithms — should a driverless car save those on board or should it plough into a group of pedestrians on a zebra crossing? And yet I also felt reassured. Algorithms are designed and programmed to be our assistants, aiding humans in making decisions and needing human supervision to work effectively.

My previous concern — that an AI machine will take my place in my GP surgery, happily running a morning clinic — is unfounded, and, from all accounts, a very long way off.

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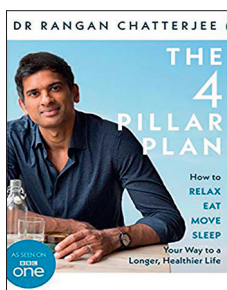
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**The 4 Pillar Plan: How to Relax, Eat, Move, Sleep Your Way to a Longer, Healthier Life**

**Rangan Chatterjee**

*Penguin Life, 2017, PB, 272pp, £16.99, 978-0241303559*



**MORE MOTION, LESS COMMOTION**

Dr Chatterjee will be familiar to many through his appearances on the BBC TV programme *Doctor in the House*, in which his lifestyle interventions and advice to various individuals were shown to be transformative.

This book follows a similar approach, based on what he chooses to call the principles of 'progressive medicine', in which attention to behavioural choices based on scientific evidence (some of it rather slim) takes priority over medical interventions. The four pillars — relaxation, eating habits, physical activity, and sleep — are each conveniently divided into five specific goals, with detailed advice for their achievement. For example, the recommended eating habits include choosing five portions of vegetables of five different colours every day, and avoiding all processed foods containing more than five ingredients; physical activity includes 10 000 steps, high-intensity interval training, and specific exercises for glutes; and sleep advice emphasises a regular bedtime routine, blackout blinds, reduction in screen time, and the nicely phrased suggestion to 'manage your commotion', through meditation, a 'gratitude journal', and learning to say no. All in all it makes a good deal of sense, and Dr Chatterjee adopts an informal, conversational style, replete with anecdotal case studies and personal experiences to support his approach. It is an extravagantly produced book, richly illustrated, though it might have been more encouraging to include fewer photos of the exemplary author — running, eating, meditating, exercising, shopping, and contemplating the landscape — and more of some average mortals for whom, one supposes, the book is intended.

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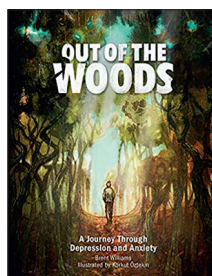
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**Out of the Woods: A Journey Through Depression and Anxiety**

**Brent Williams and Korkut Öztekin**

*Educational Resources Ltd, 2017, HB, 160pp, £19.95, 978-0473390068*



**THROUGH THE WOODS**

Starting with a quote from Dante's *The*

*Divine Comedy* that sets the theme and lends the book both its title and central metaphor, Brent Williams's graphic novel *Out of the Woods* describes his journey through depression and anxiety, and back to health, illustrated wonderfully by Korkut Öztekin's masterful draftsmanship.

In middle age, the author, a community lawyer and filmmaker, unexpectedly finds himself in a deep depression. It takes some convincing from his doctors and friends before our man accepts the diagnosis, having spent a good deal of time trying to uncover the organic roots of his numerous symptoms, while exploring various alternative medical models to try to explain the way he is feeling. Mundane misery is interspersed with magic realism as Brent experiences a series of waking dreams, in which a bearded and bespectacled mentor character reveals the severity of his depression and, via a couple of educational diversions into basic brain science, shows him what he must do to recover his mental health. The author follows some, but not all, of the advice of this mysterious guide, seeking help through psychotherapy, healthy eating, and exercise, while remaining averse to prescribed medication. Finding a decent therapist is a big help; Brent slowly recovers his gusto and begins to enjoy life's pleasures once more. In an unexpected twist, however, his nascent recovery is interrupted by a life-threatening physical illness, but a happy end ensues, nevertheless.

Comics don't have to be funny, and this one is not. The self-reflexive humour or irony that holds so many autobiographical graphic novels together is noticeably absent here, but the depth of the emotional honesty that Williams has poured into the work, combined with Öztekin's powerful visual storytelling, rendered in colourful line-and-wash, makes for a compelling and satisfying narrative, with which many readers will doubtless identify.

**Ian Williams,**

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Ian Williams is a comics artist, writer, and physician. His graphic novel *The Bad Doctor* was published in 2014 and the follow-up, *The Lady Doctor*, in 2019. He named the area of study called Graphic Medicine, founding the eponymous website in 2007, which he currently co-edits. He is co-author of the Eisner-nominated *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X707645>