

like a cold ... so you thought you'd better pop in. As an urgent appointment? To make sure it wasn't going onto your chest. Oh come on ... you're not even coughing.'

These empathise with the struggle to provide a solution to many recalcitrant patient requests. The facetious verses give humour to the frustration of the everyday drudgery. Yet, these poems give humility and wisdom to the fragile nature of the human body and the importance of the words used by the patient.

Emma examines the human in every doctor, the raw emotion, the fascination and repulsion when a patient 'took off half her face' and placed it on the desk. There is real sadness and compassion in the poem 'Missed' describing the devastation of making a mistake: 'I prescribed you medicine. I didn't think when you told me. The scan shocked us both. I am a bad doctor. I failed you.'

Emma's honest experiences demonstrate humility and give insightful reflection on the everyday interaction between patients and doctors. The book provided a sad, happy, funny, and serious read where I both laughed and cried. The poems have stayed with me long after reading them. I will certainly listen better to my patients.

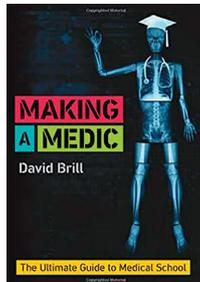
Bernadeta Bridgwood,
GP, Hannage Brook Medical Centre, Derbyshire.
Email: exchangejic@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X709781>

Making a Medic: the Ultimate Guide to Medical School

David Brill

Scion Publishing Ltd, 2019, PB, 320pp,
£15.99, 978-1911510444



LOVE THE FLUFF

I remember how bemused I felt, reading two very different books in preparation for medical school. One was a dry, daunting manual written by a medical school dean, and the other was *Doctor in the House*, Richard Gordon's whimsical novel about the jolly japes of a 1950s medical student. Fortunately, today's eager medical students can turn to *Making a Medic* — an infinitely more reliable, accessible, and up-to-date guide.

The author is an FY1 doctor, so medical school is fresh in his mind. He takes you on a journey from day one through to the foundation programme, touching on everything from looking after yourself and how to learn, to preparing for exams and getting the most out of clinical placements. There's stuff about useful apps, learning from online videos ('Don't just hit play, zone out and kid yourself that it counts

as studying!'), and six reasons why you should 'love the fluff' (how students refer to ethics, professionalism, or sociology). The cartoons, diagrams, and tables make it visually appealing and the writing is upbeat and easy to read — not surprising given the author was a science journalist before studying medicine.

I now teach medical students about general practice, 'fluff', and clinical and communication skills, so I was keen to see how the book dealt with those bits. Alongside the inevitable surgical sieves and mnemonics (much less rude than I remember), there's some wonderfully mature advice about approaches to learning, and how clinical and communication skills evolve from a rather rigid process in the early years to a nuanced art, crucial throughout your career.

My only beef would be that out of 320 pages there's just one paragraph on GP placements. I wonder if that reflects the author's own leanings and experience more than the reality for most modern students of the increasing prominence of general practice in their training.

How David Brill found time to write this as an FY1 doctor with three small children, beats me. But lots of students will be very glad he did, and I will be recommending it wholeheartedly to any I know.

Graham Easton,
Professor of Communication Skills, Bart's and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, London.

Email: g.easton@qmul.ac.uk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp20X709793>

