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STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINE

The People Behind the NHS Headlines

Yvonne Bennett
and Christina Stead

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SERIES IN SOCIOLOGY

Yvonne Bennett, Christina Stead

Stories from the Front Line

The People Behind the NHS Headlines

SERIES IN SOCIOLOGY

This is an impressive piece of research, which highlights how storytelling can be utilised to provide new insights on a topic that some people might find difficult to discuss. This book perfectly blends narration and academia like a good coffee. In this book, 'Stories from the Front Line' by Dr Bennet and Dr Stead discuss their and others' personal (and some heartbreaking) experiences of critical care in relation to NHS Scotland, as well as providing recommendations for future practice. Highly recommended!

Dr Nicole Holt

School of Allied and Public Health Professionals
Canterbury Christ Church University

Summary

NHS Scotland appears to be in crisis. Today the British media is full of headlines such as "89-year-old great-grandmother waits 5 hours for an ambulance." These are a talking point for a day or two and then another headline of a similar ilk takes over. This book examines the traumatic experiences of the elderly people whose stories make up these headlines. The authors have carried out research into the effects of long waiting times for ambulances and the problems that NHS Scotland is facing through chronic staff shortages. The waits and the limitations to patient care have long term implications for the patients, the relatives and the staff. Throughout the book we discuss iatrogenic disease/harm that is occurring daily for patients, visitors and staff.

The book concentrates on the new Glasgow hospital, The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, which opened its doors in 2015. This is one of the largest hospitals in Europe and replaces 5 older Glasgow hospitals and has been beset by major problems since its opening. By interviewing relatives and staff, the authors have examined their experiences both during and following a traumatic event. Themes found throughout the book include poor communication, trauma, low staff morale, suicide and the problems caused by the size and design of the hospital.

The authors have also analysed statistics from NHS Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service regarding waiting times and the use of agency staff. The overarching goal of this book was to give a voice to those behind the statistics.

About the authors

Yvonne Bennett obtained her BA and MA through the Open University. On leaving school, she trained as a nurse and, after having her children, retrained as a nursery schoolteacher. Yvonne has completed a PhD at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her research area of interest is conservative Presbyterianism in the Gàidhealtachd (Highlands and Islands) of Scotland. In 2021 she published a book which examines the ways in which churches in Britain help the vulnerable in their communities. The book "The Church Who Needs It? We Do!" examines the difficulties a group of South London women experience with Universal Credit and life under lockdown during the Coronavirus pandemic. In 2022, Yvonne edited a book, 'Women and Religion in Britain Today' belonging to Vernon Press.

Christina Stead studied History at Durham University and then worked as an academic administrator and manager for a university in London. After a period working in educational consultancy, Christina took a career break when her daughter was born in 2004. Seeking new challenges, she volunteered in her local community and then retrained as a careers counsellor, gaining an MA (Distinction) from Canterbury Christ Church University in 2014. Christina was awarded a scholarship by the university to pursue doctoral research. Her PhD (2020) explored the career paths of senior professional women in accountancy, education and medicine. She is currently working as a mentor to a student who is completing a doctorate in Nursing. She is also a school governor with a brief that includes safeguarding.

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