



Confessions of a GP (The Confessions Series)

Benjamin Daniels

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Benjamin Daniels is angry. He is frustrated, confused, baffled and, quite frequently, very funny. He is also a GP. These are his confessions.

A woman troubled by pornographic dreams about Tom Jones. An 80-year-old man who can't remember why he's come to see the doctor. A woman with a common cold demanding (but not receiving) antibiotics. A man with a sore knee. A young woman who has been trying to conceive for a while but now finds herself pregnant and isn't sure she wants to go through with it. A 7-year-old boy with 'tummy aches' that don't really exist.

These are his patients.

Confessions of a GP is a witty insight into the life of a family doctor. Funny and moving in equal measure it will change the way you look at your GP next time you pop in with the sniffles.

Confessions of a GP (The Confessions Series) Details

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Author : Benjamin Daniels

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From Reader Review Confessions of a GP (The Confessions Series) for online ebook

Bethan Watson says

I couldn't finish this book, I thought I would enjoy it but really it didn't do anything for me in terms of keeping me interested.

I might try again at some point, but I probably won't.

Emma says

I loved the idea of reading Confessions of a GP. It screamed 'funny' and 'interesting' and it isn't everyday you come across a book on this subject. When I picked up the book for a great price on the Kindle, I started to read it right away, I wanted to know what secrets the author was willing to divulge to me.

There are a few chapters that are real gems and they are sure to make you gasp, put your hand to your mouth in shock, make you want to read snippets aloud to anyone who will listen as well as causing a bit of a giggle.

Unfortunately once I had read the good chapters in the first half of the book, I started to feel like the author was being patronising instead of being funny. If you suffer from the illnesses he does tend to not take too seriously, I can see readers being easily offended. I also felt there was confusion with the chapters being all mixed up and in no particular order. As a reader this didn't work for me because I was being taken in one direction and then suddenly another for no reason other than the chapter subjects are mixed.

I would recommend this book to people who are looking for something light hearted, funny and not serious. There are some great subjects but do not take this seriously. Despite feeling disappointed with the ending, Confessions of a GP does still deserve 2 stars.

Hil says

I really didn't like the writer. He came across as opinionated, defensive, snobby, judgemental, preachy and a bit holier than thou, in what is supposed to be a light-hearted, amusing look at some of the patients an average GP gets in his surgery in the UK. I did not enjoy being lectured on the state of the country, the class system and the National Health Service. I wonder who the intended audience is meant to be, as anyone who would care about his opinions on the state of things would probably be a doctor themselves, but I'm sure they'd find the book tedious reading as they do would do the same job.

Petra X says

I finished the book. Why it was such a page turner or a five star is hard to define. It was about the routine of a young GP with a bit about his training, working in A&E and thoughts on the National Health Service. He's

very firmly in favour of it. As am I.

There were several very interesting discussions apart from transgender (below, in spoilers). One of them was of the intractability of the pain of fibromyalgia. He said it was only diagnosed when no other cause for the pain could be found and that it rarely responded to anything much other than opiates. The author said it's cause was generally SLS - shit life syndrome. But that sufferers generally would not put their very real physical symptoms down to the awful things that had happened in their lives and wanted to separate the mental from the physical. That was interesting.

Another discussion was that of measles vaccinations. He said that not vaccinating children was a middle class phenomenon. People chose not to despite Wakefield's linking MMR to autism being proved fake. He is an absolute charlatan who had been paid to demonstrate the link and who had developed his own measles vaccination he wanted to sell. But that said, if Daniels is right there should be much more autism among the working classes and much less among the middle classes and strangely there isn't. There isn't any difference at all.

Anyway, back to measles. He said that there are children who cannot be vaccinated. Those with various diseases, ones that compromise the immune system, and children undergoing various forms of treatment including chemotherapy. He said they were never at risk because they were protected by everyone else being vaccinated. Now they weren't and measles is a fatal disease in a small number of children and a costly one for the health service to treat as there was no cure, they just had to be hospitalised until they got better.

There was an interesting point about near-euthanasia which is permissible in the UK and probably everywhere else as well. That is that a patient near death and in obvious pain even when unconscious could be given morphine. It would depress the breathing and likely hasten death. The doctor said he would not give the morphine if the family objected and it was their concern that he would take most into account. (He could be accused of wrongful killing, so he has to prioritise that over compassion). My grandma asked for her "special injection" when she could take no more and the family doctor gave it to her, she slipped into a coma and I was with her, holding her hand when she died about twelve hours later.

The style of writing meant the book was an entertaining and light read, but there was depth and much that was thought-provoking. I hope the author goes on to write many more books because his lightness of touch could well transform heavy medical subjects into ones that many more people than otherwise would read.

Transgender discussion to which most of the comments below refer. It was written as I read the book. (view spoiler)

June Louise says

As a nurse who has a good supply of humorous work-stories, I downloaded this book onto my Kindle in order to see the medic's side of life. "Confessions of a GP" are presented in short case studies; some comic, some political, and some where you feel the author is warning the reader against bothering doctors too much. To be honest, I was a little disappointed as I had expected more of a GP equivalent of a James Herriot type of book.

At about half-way through, I began to get a little bored with all the case stories: there were so many! However, I persevered, and I'm glad I did or I would have missed out on some "gems".

The thing that put me off most was the language. I know many people will think I am a prude but I really don't want to be reading the F-word. I know it is commonly used nowadays, but I personally hate it and, although doctors are human, I expected the use of some English words to be a little more tasteful. I had thought of recommending this book to my brother-in-law, who is an anaesthetist, but I know he would not appreciate the language in parts. It's not bad, but not necessary. But that's just a personal opinion.

On the whole it's a good little book which is easy to read. The comic stories really are good, my favourite being the chapter entitled "Tom Jones." Enjoy.

Lisa says

I'm not sure what to say about this one really. I found some parts of the book really interesting in relation to some of the things that people go to see the Dr about, and it intrigued me that some go just to talk and then when their 10 mins is up they just get up and walk out. I did find him quite patronising in places though, especially when he mentioned something that I had been to the Dr's about and then laughed about the patient. The language is a bit strong in places and I don't know why but I found this strange coming from a Dr, although I realise they are human like the rest of us. I think it's because I put my Dr on a bit of a pedestal and hold him in high regard and it just seemed strange to hear a Dr use such strong language.

The book itself has made me wonder whether at times I should just suffer in silence and not bother my Dr, and I'm not sure if this is a good thing if other people feel the same too. It may put people off visiting their Dr.

Some things he mentioned were extremely amusing though and did make me laugh, but then I thought I am actually laughing at what some people think to them, is quite important. Although there are some things he mentions which I definately wouldn't bother a Dr about and am quite shocked that people do. One chapter related to what reasons people give to the Dr's to get a sick note for work. Some were unbelievable. As he says "When I hand out a sick note, I am basically signing that person a cheque made up of taxpayers' money". This was a valid point.

Read it if you want an insight into what a Dr does during his day and learn about how the NHS works in relation to Dr's.

Shona says

This book allows you to get into the head of a GP to find what he really thinks of being a doctor and it seems he gives a very unadulterated account of how it is.

Yes he comes across as opinionated, if he didn't there would be no basis of this book.

It is easy to read and requires no great concentration but it does give you an interesting view into the head of a doctor.

Funny at times, truthful but perhaps hard to swallow at other times.

Marijan says

Thank you, Dr. Daniels, for reminding me why I decided to become a hospital doctor and not a GP. My hat is down to you and all the GP doctors around the world who find the time to be psychotherapists, social workers and clerks for their patients.

Knjigu bih preporu?io svakom tko ima ikakvog posla sa zdravstvenom službom. napisana je zanimljivo, duhovito, i iako iz perspektive lije?nika op?e prakse u UK, dovoljno je dodirnih to?aka sa svim krajevima zapadnog svijeta.

Stephen says

As I work in healthcare like the author, I jumped at the opportunity to get some insight into the life of a GP...

The book is very funny and interesting in parts but it's main problem is that it's a bit all over the place. Just seems like random stories have been collected together and cobbled together for the book.

"Dr Daniels" seems like a decent enough Dr. Certainly he comes across as very caring and passionate about his job in some chapters. Then you will read another chapter, (The chapter on Fibromyalgia springs to mind) and it seems he has very little patience with some of his patients... That pretty much sums this book up: entertaining but often a bit confusing.

Smitha says

It was a fantastic read. I could relate to many thing stated here, though am not a GP associated with the British NHS. This collection of anectdotes from the life of a GP is written by a currently practicing GP under a pseudonym. All the stories were thought provoking, and most were funny, more the so because it was not intentionally evoked humor. I read this book within a day or so and would recommend this to all in the medical profession. Non medical persons may find it a bit difficult to comprehend the scenario.

Lynley says

It would be interesting to read similar from an Australian GP, in which the politics would be different and slightly more relevant for this Australian resident. However, this is still a really fun read. Do I feel a little bad saying that? Yes... There's definitely a small element of schadenfreude, though not as much as I expected when picking it up. I had to skip the chapter on bodily fluids when he started to talk about the disgustingness of sputum. I can't deal with any bodily fluids at all, and when I mean 'deal', I am a person who can faint very swiftly, which put an end to my dreams of working in the area of health care in my very first training session. (Long story.)

The main thing I got out of this book was 'how not to be an asshole patient' and 'how to get the most out of your ten minutes'. I personally am never in the consulting room for my full allocation of minutes -- I should probably start counting myself lucky, because I think my GP knows as soon as I walk in that I'll be a quick, white, middle-class case of 'worried well'. Plus, I always get straight to the point. However: Is it okay to talk about more than one complaint if the first one is addressed in five? I feel I should be able to do that, especially since we pay quite a bit to see our GP around these parts...

However, as we age, we start to take up more of our GPs' time, and since I really hate visiting doctors and hairdressers, I'm not particularly looking forward to that. (For some wacky reason I don't mind dentists quite so much.)

Now I'm in the mood for reading the same from a dentist.

Why does this cover have a self-published look to it, given that it's produced by HarperCollins? Or maybe we've finally got to the point where you can't tell a self-published book from a traditionally published one.

Hallelujah, I guess! We may be reaching publishing equality.

Christine Blachford says

I went through a bit of a phase reading these true life occupation-based memoir-style books a while back, and I must have picked this one up at the time. I remember it was very popular in the Amazon Kindle charts for a while but I've only just got round to reading it.

It's quite short, very interesting, and most importantly – not too negative. It's so easy for these types of books to be depressing, particularly the ones from people in a difficult job. The government troubles and NHS politics can put a big downer on things, but thankfully there are only brief mentions in this book.

The nice thing about Dr Daniels' thoughts is that they are more about his role in society and less about specific medical memories. There are patients mentioned, but it's normally as a means to telling a more fascinating story about life from a Doctor's point of view. Rather than featuring weird and wonderful medical complaints, the book focuses on the people behind them and how society and the medical profession communicate. It's not always pretty, but it's mostly gently written, with insight and humour, and a little bit of inspiration to take away.

Bogdan says

Such an easy and refreshing book. I admit I laughed, cried and reflected upon a number of things. It was also a good break from epic fantasies, thrillers and murder mysteries.

Clare Anstead says

Dr Ben is quite funny and clearly is still in love with his chosen profession - which is great
I read this (ironically) during a hospital stay and couldn't help but compare it to my experience of being there. It reminded me all over again why the NHS should be saved and why our fantastic doctors and nurses deserve our praise not our moans about long waits and such - when the chips are down the NHS works brilliantly and that point was made over and over again in this book. It reminds you that yes you might be feeling a bit grotty and be grumpy cos you've waited a yeah for an ingrowing toe nail removal but just maybe thats because the medical team are saving lives and dealing with real emergencies - It all about perspective

Khadija Jamal says

This one I really liked! It's basically a GP (general practitioner, i.e. a family doctor) recalling various patient stories and making lots of interesting and insightful points about the NHS, health and wellbeing, and the state of the modern British patient.

I laughed out loud many times at some really funny stories and also hummed and aahh-ed at the topics at hand. I think I will probably go back to read it again at some point, because it was fun and thoughtful. It also conveyed what I love the most about medicine - being able to observe humanity with all its quirks.

Personally I think anyone who doesn't like GPs very much (which seem to be many of my friends lol) should read this book!

Well written and not a heavy read. Thoroughly recommended.

Kat says

Last week I posted a review of Hospital Babylon, the story of one day in an English A&E Department, which I really enjoyed. Because I enjoyed it so much I went through my books on search for something similar, and stumbled across Confessions of a GP, which I picked up a couple of years ago. I was interested in reading a book from the perspective of a General Practitioner, because it promised to be more intimate and perhaps more focused on specific patients and scenarios.

However, Confessions of a GP is more a series of vignettes across the career of Benjamin Daniels, both as a GP and as a doctor in training in a hospital setting. Several of the stories were sad, others almost funny, but the vast majority came across to me as being rather condescending.

I'm sure that as a GP, Benjamin Daniels has more than his fair share of frustrations with people - from those that treat their doctor like a get-out-of-work-free card, or take up their time with seemingly inane problems

with unrealistic expectations of what their GP can do for them. But as a book, it's rather disappointing, and his overall attitude comes across as knowing more than the average person, which in some cases is perhaps true, but left me more than a little disappointed.

The only character that consistently appears throughout the book is Benjamin himself, and as he is a locum GP, rather than having a permanent practice, there's not even the relief of having a receptionist or nurse play any type of recurring role. And seeing as I liked him less and less as the book progressed, my enthusiasm for his stories lessened too.

Perhaps I'm being a little unfair because I'm comparing Confessions to an almost similar book, but surely writing about real people with a little more compassion isn't such a big ask. There were a handful of patients that I was interested in their outcomes, but Daniels was so negative that it also started to rub off on me and I just stopped caring.

I really can't recommend this book to anyone, even if you are interested in medical non-fiction. It was just one man's whinging rant, and I just didn't buy into it at all.

Emmeline says

I don't see why the author felt it was necessary to include transphobic and misogynistic language throughout this book. I stopped reading about 2/3 of the way through because I was fed up of it.

Joanne says

A great bedtime read, each anecdote being about 3 pages long.

Jenny (hades2) (Chocolate Chunky Munkie) says

I was struggling between rating this three and four stars, so it would be a 3.5 star rating.

I was eager to read this book as I worked as a Doctor's Receptionist for several years; I thought it would be good to see it from the Doctors perspective. I think I should write a book from the receptionist's point of view, I have many a tale there.....

Well this book is very amusing! I was sat on the train and had to stifle a few laughs. I thought the short chapters because it kept each section short and interesting.

In the book there was a couple of chapters about drugs reps, I found myself nodding my head in agreement as to how persistent they were. I remember fending off at least two a day, but I did marvel how the "pretty" ones seemed to get through. The Doctor's at my practice were really nice to us and used to give us the bounty from the drugs reps, we came home with loads of stationery and mugs.

Overall I found this book had a nice easy feel to it, but, it did lose points as some of the chapters seemed a little disjointed. Would I recommend this book? Yes because I do think the stories are fun and entertaining.

Kathryn says

3.5 stars for this one. I found it to be a humorous account of the life of a British GP. I suspect it would be fairly similar to the life of an Australian GP, although our Medicare system has distinct difference to the British NHS, but some of his issues ring true to me, as an allied health professional - patients failing to show up, having to say difficult things to patients that you know they don't want to hear, then having them leave your room dissatisfied with the advice you've given even though you know the advice is evidence-based, feeling like a bad service provider because of this dissatisfaction, getting frustrated by companies and people who make wild health claims about a product which are unsubstantiated and which exploit vulnerable people.

I laughed at the list of complaints that some patients present with (my favourite was "When I eat a lot of rice cakes, it makes my wee smell of rice cakes"), I chuckled at patient, Elaine, who has pornographic dreams about Tom Jones and wants the GP to write Tom a letter explaining things ("I'm sure if you just explained everything he would see sense, I know he would"), I laughed at the rookie house officer at the hospital who answers his pager with an inflated sense of his own importance only to find his consultant on the line asking him to phone in a Chinese takeaway order as he, the consultant, was going to be stuck in theatre all evening, I laughed as later on that same evening when he attends a cardiac arrest and is given a turn on the defibrillator paddles (the experienced medical staff having decided that the patient is unable to be saved and the newbie should have a go for the experience) he manages to electrocute himself with his stethoscope!

I laughed at the possibly real-life errors made in patients' notes (and wondered whether I'd written similar things in any of my reports to GPs...).

I felt sympathy for the GP as he dealt with the red tape of the NHS, as he came to grips with the fact that despite the free lunches that drug reps treat the doctors to, there really is no such thing as a "free" lunch.

The patient story that touched me the most was that of the single elderly lady with no children who was in hospital and not cooperative but just wanting to go home and get back to her cat - it was very poignant, and I could just see myself behaving like her in 40 years (if not less!).

I know a couple of friends have found the author's attitude difficult to cope with (whinging about things and rude to the patients), but I haven't found this. He whinged a little about the system (which I felt was understandable to a certain extent with any red tape), and he certainly recounts the most humorous or difficult or flabbergasting or gross aspects of his patients (for gross - the morbidly, morbidly, morbidly obese man with the maggots in the folds of his skin wins the prize!), but I can hear his compassion for his patients in his writing. And while he doesn't always get it right - he admits that he finds it difficult to treat some people (for various reasons) with the same detachment that he extends to others, he is aware of these issues and resolves to make a greater effort next time he sees a similar patient.

All in all, an interesting and enjoyable read.
