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BRITAIN'S TOP DOCTORS

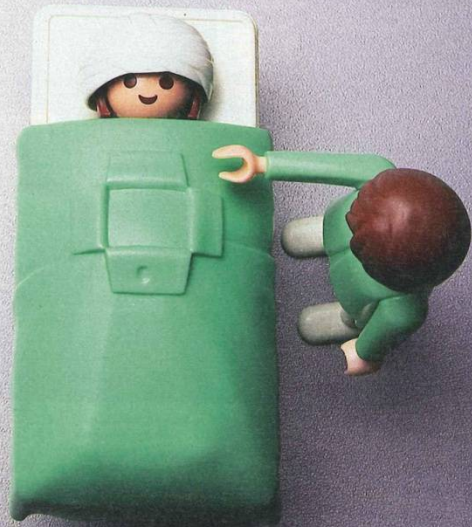
Britain's TOP DOCTORS

Dr Mark Porter introduces our special issue

British doctors have been at the vanguard of medical science for more than two centuries, and our hospitals and universities are home to some of the brightest minds in the business. When it comes to medicine, the best in Britain is still the best in the world.

There has never been a definitive list of the UK's leading specialists, and there probably never will be. Deciding whether a specialist is at the top of his or her game isn't just about their academic prowess, diagnostic skills or clinical outcomes – it's also about more subjective qualities such as empathy, dedication and drive. And what works well for one patient can be awkward for another.

But there are few things more important than having a good doctor, and there has ▶



never been as much opportunity to choose which specialist you see. People who have gone private will be used to consulting whoever they want, but in recent years choice has become an increasingly important part of the NHS, too. But that ability to choose is useless unless you have the knowledge to make the right decision.

At the moment, patients simply don't have the information required to make fully informed decisions about where to go to have their hip operation or gall bladder removed. The NHS Choose and Book system offers patients a variety of different specialists and hospitals, but, in my experience, decisions are all too often made on the basis of geography – which hospital is closest? Or the patient simply says: "Where would you go, Doc?"

Asking your GP is very sensible. They should know who the best specialists are in their locality, and whom to avoid. But good regional knowledge is of little benefit when looking at a national picture, and this is where our list may help.

Over the past six months, a team of *Times* researchers asked charities, specialists and professional bodies and associations to come up with a list of leaders in their particular field. Our first

Being at the top isn't just about academic prowess, but more subjective qualities

discovery was that if you asked ten different people, you got ten different answers, such is the depth of expertise at the top of every area. But there are some names that appeared on everyone's lists and it is these specialists that we have recommended. From the fertility specialist responsible for the first "breast cancer gene-free" baby to the pioneering heart transplant surgeon who hates the sight of blood, from the anaesthetist who braves the front lines of Afghanistan to the doctor who performed the first laser surgery in the womb, they are not just extraordinary doctors, but extraordinary people.

The list is by no means exhaustive. There are lots of doctors who are regarded as key leaders in their fields who aren't featured simply because there isn't room, and there are some specialities that we haven't even covered. Just because your consultant doesn't appear on this list does not mean that he or she isn't world-class – all we can say is, if they do feature, then you are likely to be in the right hands.

Dr Mark Porter is medical correspondent of The Times and a practising GP in South Gloucestershire. Can't find your favourite doctor? Go to thetimes.co.uk/magazine – we want to hear who you think should be on the list

Who contributed to our top doctor guide

NHS Trusts (NHST) and Foundation Trusts (FT)

Addenbrooke's NHST; Alder Hey Children's FT; Basingstoke and North Hampshire FT; Birmingham Heartlands & Solihull NHST; Central Manchester University Hospitals FT; Chelsea and Westminster FT; Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology FT; Great Ormond Street NHST; Guy's and St Thomas' FT; Heart of England FT; Imperial College NHST; James Cook University Hospital; King's College FT; Leeds Teaching NHST; Oxford Radcliffe NHST; Lothian; Mile End; Moorfields Eye FT; Nottingham University Hospitals NHST; Papworth FT; Queen Victoria FT; Royal Brompton & Harefield FT; Royal Free Hampstead NHST; Royal National Orthopaedic NHST; Royal Orthopaedic Birmingham FT; Southampton General; St Bart's NHST; St George's NHST; University College London FT; University Hospitals Birmingham FT; University Hospitals Bristol FT; University Hospitals of Leicester NHST; Walton Centre FT; plus leading universities and private hospitals throughout the UK.

Charities, organisations and professional bodies

Alzheimer's Society; Association of British Neurologists; Asthma UK; Beating Bowel Cancer; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Care; British Acupuncture Council; British Association for Sexual Health and HIV; British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons; British Association of Dermatologists; British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons;

British Association of Urological Surgeons; British Dietetics Association; British Elbow and Shoulder Society; British Fertility Society; British Heart Foundation; British Lung Foundation; British Medical Acupuncture Society; British Medical Journal; British Nutrition Foundation; British Orthopaedic Association; British Osteopathic Association; British Sleep Society; British Society for Rheumatology; British Society of Gastroenterology; British Thoracic Society; Cancer Research UK; Centre for Reproductive and Genetic Health; College of Chiropractors; College of Emergency Medicine; Diabetes UK; General Chiropractic Council; Harley Medical Group; Harris Birthright Research Centre; Institute of Psychiatry; Journal of Laryngology & Otolaryngology; London Allergy Clinic; London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games; Macmillan Cancer Support; Macular Disease Society; Ministry of Defence; Oxford Osteopaths; Pelican Cancer Foundation; Premier Podiatry; Royal College of Anaesthetists; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Royal College of Ophthalmologists; Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health; Royal College of Physicians; Royal College of Psychiatrists; Royal College of Radiologists; Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; Royal College of Surgeons of England; Royal Opera House; Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery; Society for Endocrinology; Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists.

MENTAL HEALTH

Henrietta Bowden-Jones

Consultant psychiatrist specialising in substance misuse. Works across several spheres, including outpatient work with the homeless at the Soho Rapid Access Clinic and a private practice treating professionals from addicted musicians to stressed footballers. Has a national role as a member of the Faculty of Addictions at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and frequently works in human resources, helping patients return to work after hospitalisation. Trustee of Sporting Chance Clinic, a charity that helps athletes fight drugs, alcohol and gambling, and involved in research at Imperial College in the neurobiology of alcohol.

Colin Drummond

Expert on the treatment of alcoholics, Professor of Addiction Psychiatry at the National Addiction Centre, University of London, and consultant addiction psychiatrist at the Maudsley. Acts as the Royal College's spokesperson on alcohol problems and is a member of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence and Alcohol Problems.

Hamid Ghodse

Expert in drug dependency and Professor of Psychiatry and International Drug Policy at St George's, with more than 300 papers published on drug-related issues. Awarded a CBE in 1999 for his work treating alcohol abuse and drug dependency. As President of the International Narcotics Control Board, has criticised the decriminalisation of cannabis.

Michael Rutter

Knighted in 1992 and the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2010 Royal College of Psychiatrists Awards. Known as the "father of child psychology", and was the first consultant

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in child and adolescent psychiatry in the UK. Has a children's and adolescents' centre named after him at the Maudsley.

Janet Treasure

Professor of Psychiatry at King's College, who also heads the Eating Disorders Unit at the Maudsley. Has more than 20 years' experience dealing with eating disorders and is Chief Medical Officer for the Eating Disorders Association. Has published more than 150 peer-reviewed papers and several influential lay guides to coping with anorexia.

Gordon Turnbull

The country's leading trauma and PTSD expert, having counselled well-known trauma victims such as Terry Waite, John McCarthy and Jackie Mann. Worked extensively with emergency services personnel following the Lockerbie plane crash and during the first Gulf War as the RAF's psychiatric adviser in the field. Developed treatment strategies for dealing with trauma in the RAF that are now used for police officers, emergency services personnel and military veterans. Currently consultant psychiatrist at the private Capio Nightingale Hospital, London.