

.BAK

News from an unreliable source...

The eGPR (the electronic general practice insurance record) is finally coming into being. However, .BAK would like to draw to your appalled attention what might have been. Here's a copy of the first draft, v0.001 (allegedly), just to show you what you've been spared.

'Please fill this in without speaking to the patient, and from your knowledge of him/her. However, if you fail to answer every single question completely and totally accurately we will (a) not pay you (b) sue you for perjury (c) report you to the GMC for failing to act in the best interests of your patient. Other than that you do not need to see the patient and can answer all questions from your records.

How long have you known this patient? And in what capacity? (answer in litres).

Left foot shoe size___

Height in rods___

Weight in ounces___

Can the patient rub his/her stomach while patting his/her head?

Why?

Enter all BP's recorded, making sure diastolics are stated as 5th phase, not 4th phase. Ignore all readings done at 4th phase, not 5th phase.

When did you last contact the patient and what conditions was he/she suffering from?

Have these conditions resolved?

How do you know, as you've just said this was the last time you contacted the patient? (Are you sure you're telling the truth in this questionnaire?)

Social:-

Can he/she cook crêpes suzettes?

...with one hand?

Medication:-

When was the last time they:-

i. were bled?

ii. had leeches applied?

iii. bought paracetamol?

(Compulsory question) State the specific gravity of the urine.

Give full details of outside consulta-

tions in the space provided: ___ Now write his/her NHS number here ___

Thank you.

If dead:-

Bearing in mind that approximately 50% of all death certificates are inaccurate, do you have any doubts whatsoever about the need to cremate this patient?

Has the patient seen this report? Did he/she ask for anything to be deleted or amended? So what did it say originally?

Now sign this form in the box provided, making sure that no part of your signature touches the edges →



Mike J. Flanagan

Doris—the sequel

We met Doris last time—you remember, the secretary who's a death sentence to computers?

Much against our better judgement we took her on the staff annual outing to the Zap Zone, where everyone dresses up in high tech breast-plates and runs around the inside of a two-storey, dimly-lit, smoke-filled building firing off lasers at each other and at the other side's 'base'. The breast-plates have a laser sensor to register hits taken and the guns register hits given.

Be warned—staff usually have a personality change doing this and it's quite frightening how that timid mouse of a secretary turns into a predatory killer when let loose with a laser gun. (We now routinely run a Zap Zone session as part of our staff interview scheme.)

So we took Doris to the Zap Zone—an unwise move. After the first session everyone returned to the debriefing room (certain staff undergoing person-

ality changes on the way, shedding their storm-trooper image in the process.) Then we were told what our individual tallies were, counting the number of hits and deducting the number of times we ourselves were hit. Typical scores were: Susan 840; Elizabeth 759; Frances 600.

Doris came out with minus 1,180.

(The announcement of these totals was done by the manager—with a completely straight face. I don't know how he did it.)

Then he suggested a few changes to the makeup of the teams, depending upon who were the best attackers. He came to Doris and without blinking an eyelid, looked at her and murmured reassuringly, 'We usually find that people like you are best defending the base.' (Spin-speak for 'Let's get you out of the way at all costs, shall we?')

So, proudly clutching her laser gun, Doris marched off to defend the base.

Fifteen minutes later the second session ended, the lights went up, the smoke stopped, the weird music and battle noises got turned off, and we all went back to the debriefing room to take off our armour (and our personas) ready for the next phase of the evening out which was a meal.

Shortly afterwards we were all outside and the cry went up. 'Where's Doris?' So the manager went back into the Zap Zone building to look for her. Sure enough, there she was, still clutching her laser and still guarding the base, even though there hadn't been another soul in the building for the previous ten minutes, the smoke had dispersed, there was total silence and the lights had gone up.

I altered her logout script that night. Ever afterwards, whenever she logged off after a session's work a notice came up on her computer, saying, 'Doris—still guarding the base.'

She was very proud of that. I don't know why, but she was.

Journal watch

When Dr Adrian Upton of McMaster University connected EEG leads to a mould of lime-flavoured jelly he detected signals which, if emitted by a human brain, would indicate life. He hopes he was picking up stray electrical signals.

Reproduced with permission from New Scientist magazine's Feedback column. More examples can be found at www.newscientist.com/feedback

In March's issue

System 6000 v3 for power users...

...setting up a Local User Group...

...comfortable computing...

...the wish lists...

...and much, much more!

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