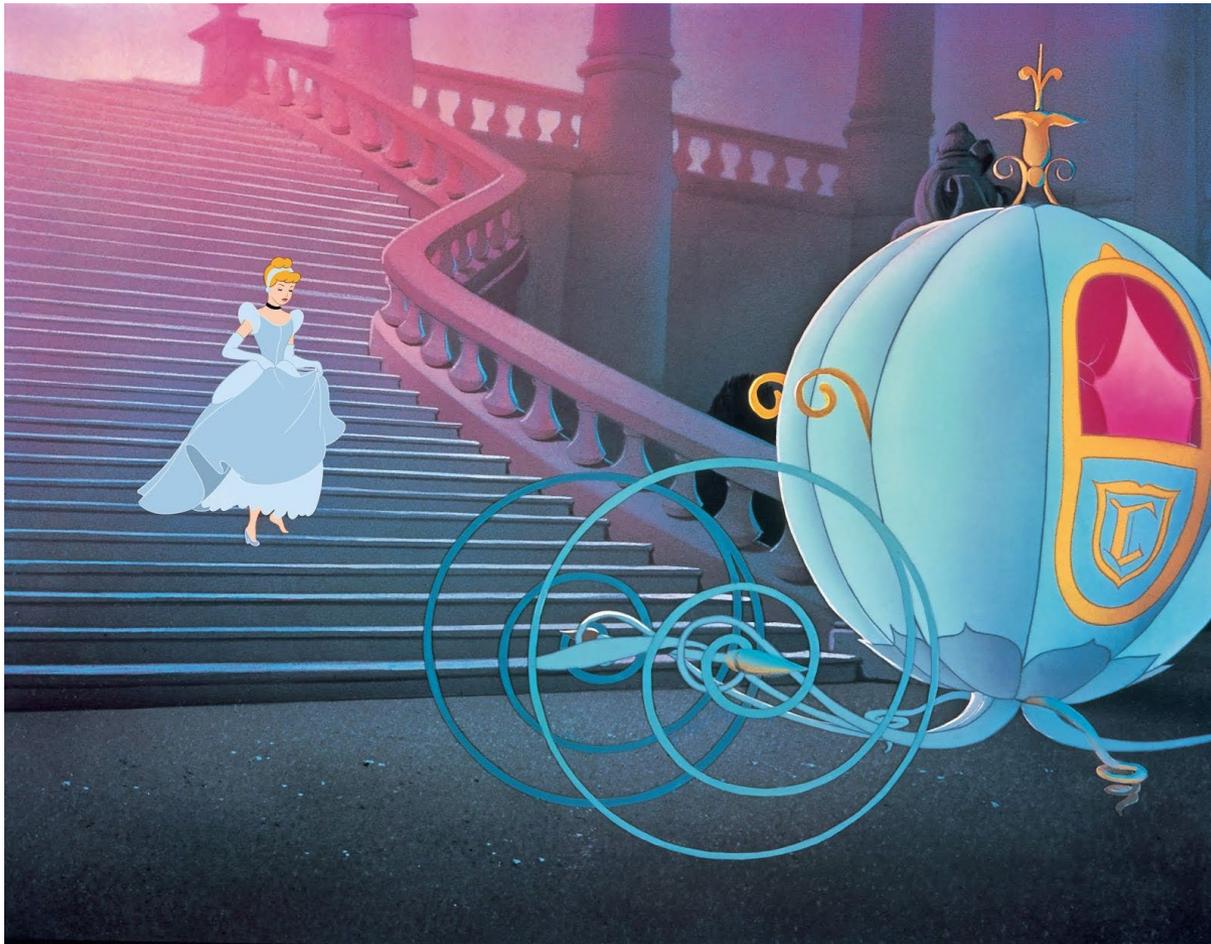


# Career Guidance: the Cinderella of Medical Education



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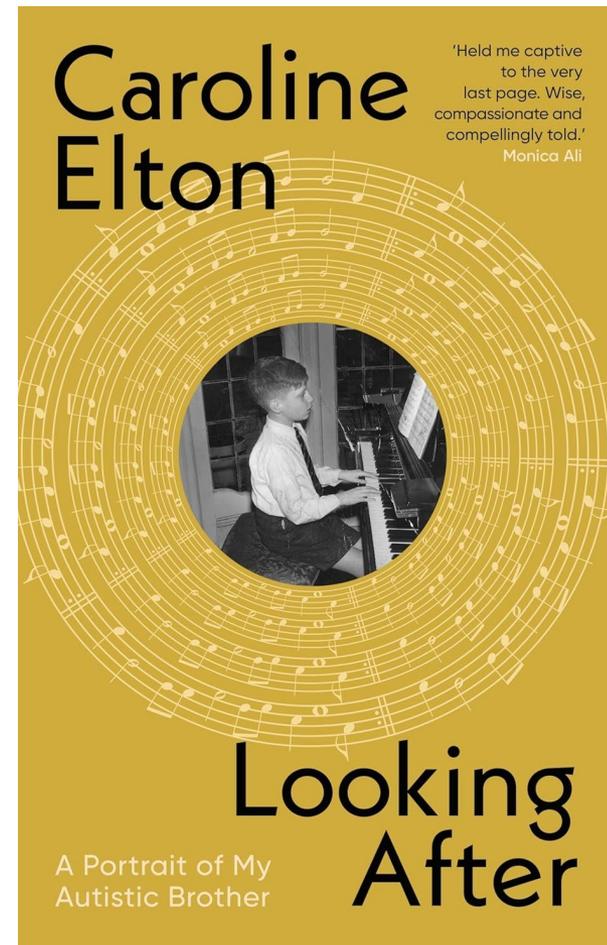
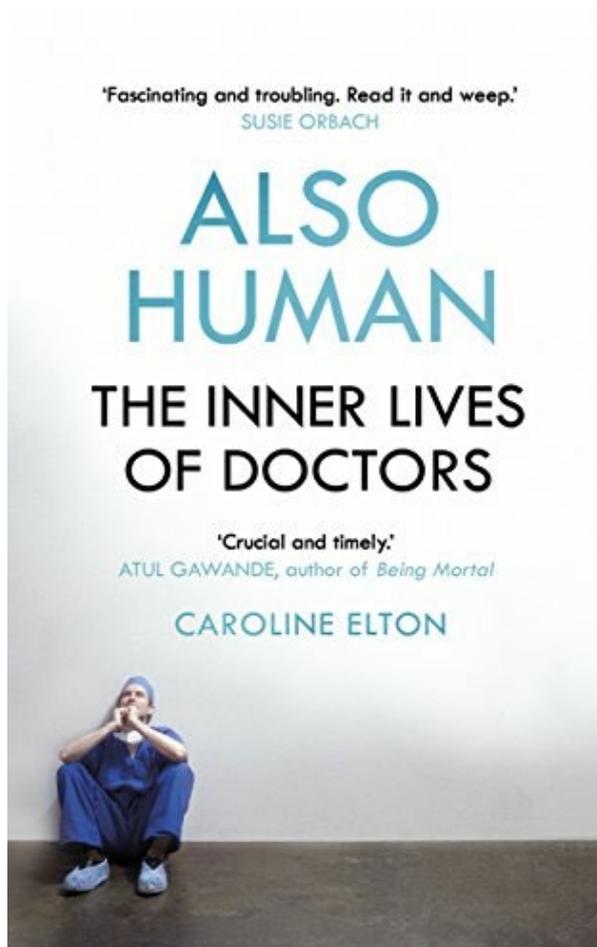
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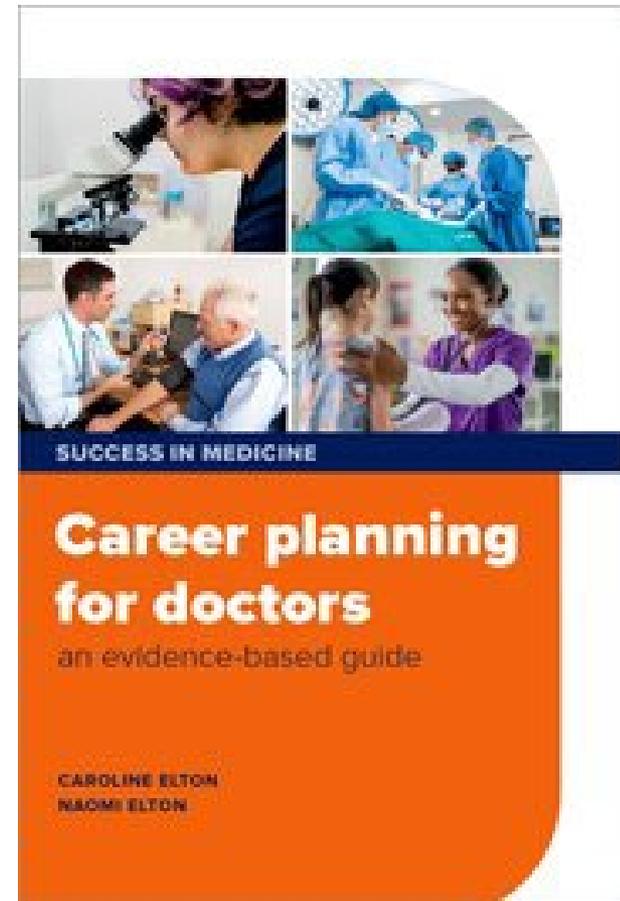
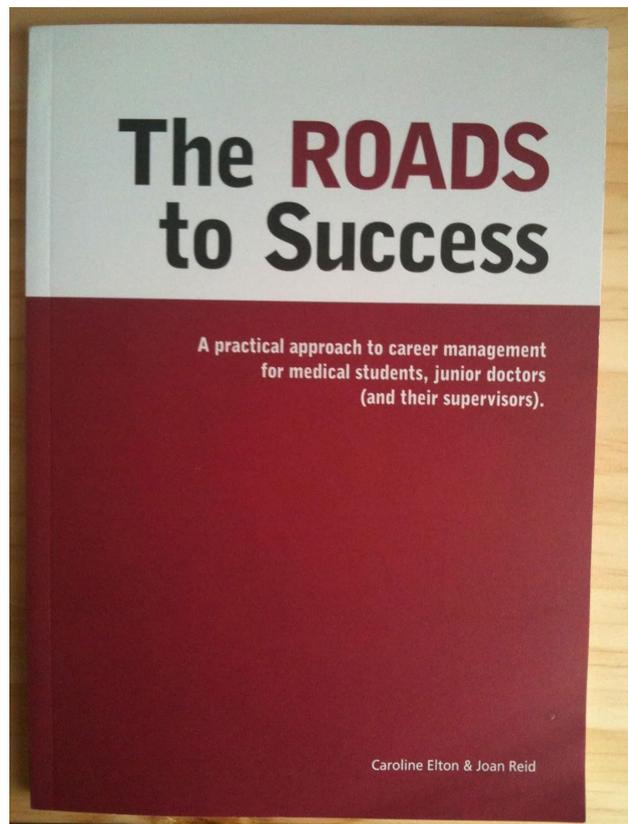
# Brief Introduction

- Chartered psychologist (with dual accreditation in occupational and counselling psychology)
- Specialise in complex career counselling
- 1998-2008 Education Adviser with KSS Deanery
- 2008-Feb 2014 Head of Careers Unit, London Deanery
- Feb 2014 – Set up Career Planning for Doctors
- Feb 2022-5 – Senior Adviser Norwich Medical School/Career Lead

# Non-fiction Books



# Career Books for Doctors



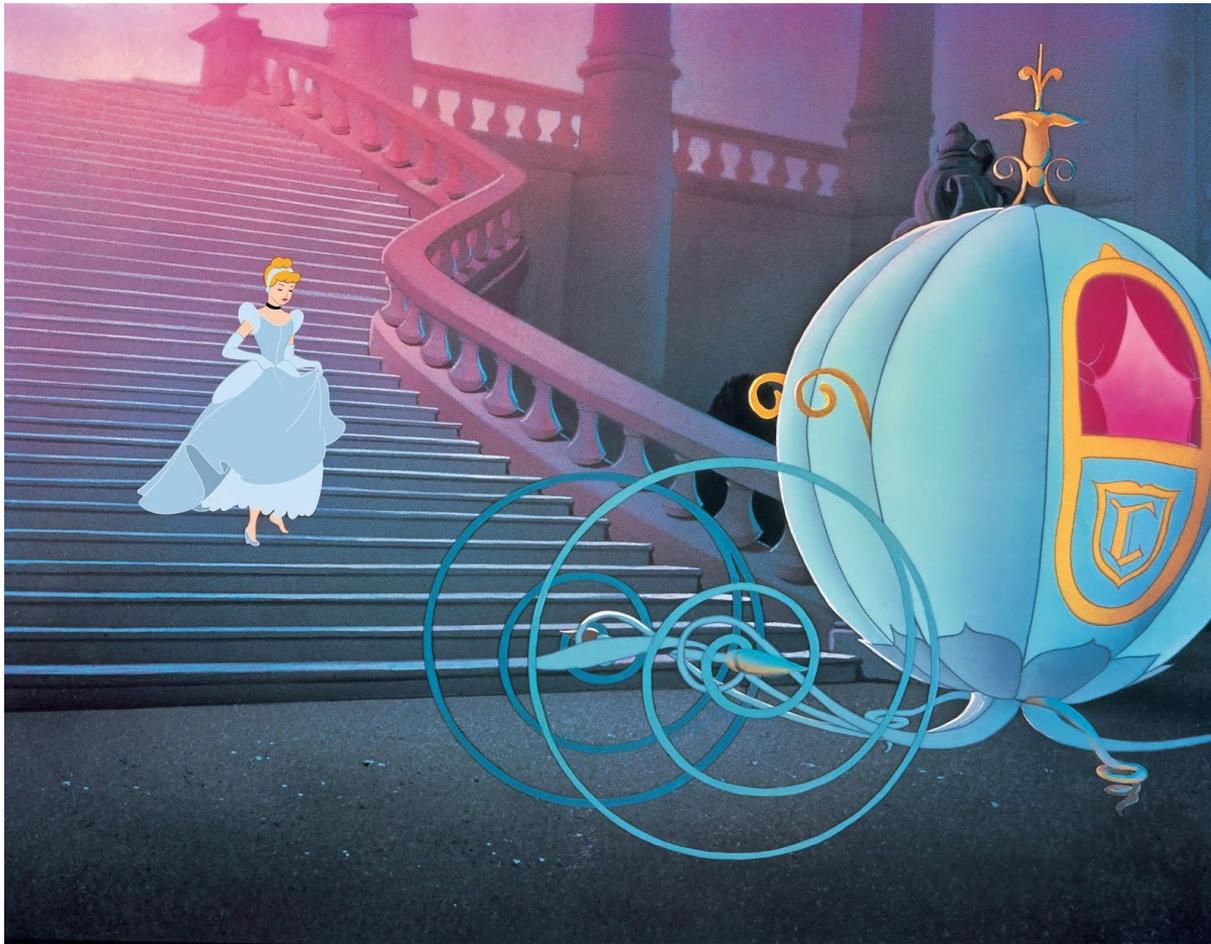
# Straw Poll



Have you ever received helpful careers advice from somebody else?

Of those who have received helpful careers advice – did you receive the advice from a careers professional?

# Why Cinderella



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# Medical Education and Psychology



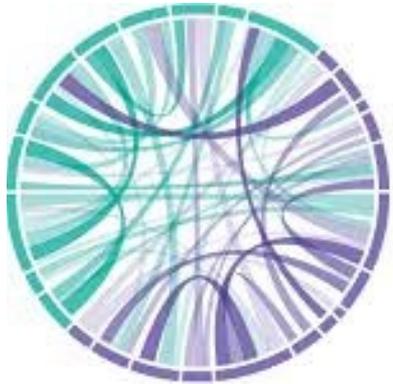
- Swiss Cheese Model of safety
- Measurement Error in OSCE design
- Selection
- Burnout
- Resilience
- Stereotype Threat
- Differential Attainment

Professor Chris McManus  
Medical Education (1997)  
*Medical Careers: stories of a life*



‘One only has to look at the 1989 *Handbook of Career Theory* to realize how emaciated and weak is the approach of traditional medical education for understanding careers.’

# Evidence-based careers information?



Medical  
Schools  
Council

‘There are a wide range of medical specialties and there is something for everyone.’

# Psychological Underpinnings of Career Decisions



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# In the beginning – Frank Parsons (1909)

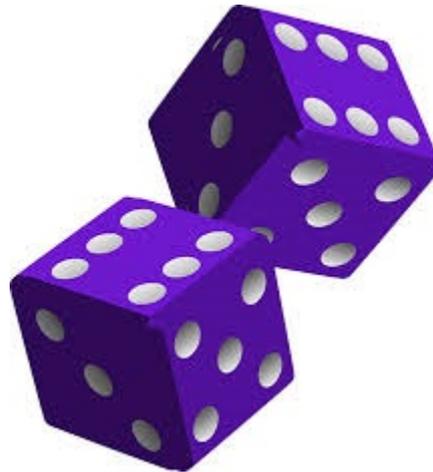
In the wise choice of a vocation there are 3 broad factors:

1. A clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes
2. A knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work.
3. True reasoning on the relations of these 2 groups of facts

# Personal Attributes of a Doctor (Parsons, 1909)

- Skill in diagnosis which depends on knowledge of the body, symptoms, diseases etc
- Powers of observation and analysis
- Constructive reasoning, or putting all the facts together to make a valid working hypothesis or rational conclusion to the whole case
- Caution, resource, knowledge of remedies
- Memory for volume of facts
- Sympathy- a pleasing address
- Eyesight
- Mechanical Ability
- Attractive personality/fine character
- Inventiveness
- Health
- Love of the work
- Resources to buy a practice or live while building one

# What about Chance?



# Planned Happenstance/Chaos Theory

‘Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted but getting what you have, which, once you have got it, you may be smart enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known’.

Krumboltz and Levin, 2007

*Luck is no accident.* California. Impact Publishers

# Capitalizing on Chance

Planned Happenstance theory proposes clients need to develop 5 key skills to recognize, create, and use chance as a potential career opportunity.

- Curiosity – Exploring new learning opportunities
- Persistence – Exerting effort despite setbacks
- Flexibility – Changing attitudes and circumstances
- Optimism – Viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable
- Risk Taking – Taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes

# Probably the most important slide on career theory

Career decision making is not an exclusively rational practice....reason, intuition and occupational engagement contribute mutually to adaptive career decision making

As for the basic mechanism by which rationality and intuition become richer – it is experience acquired via engagement

**We would do well to teach people to think and feel about experiential information in a more intentional way**

(T Krieshok et al, 2009 – Journal of Vocational Behavior).

# How can we best help trainees make robust career decisions?



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An important parallel  
(ref Elton and Borges, 2013 in T.Swanwick, Understanding Medical  
Education)

- **Clinical Decision Making**

Taking a History

Examination/Investigations

Diagnosis

Treatment Plan

**Career Decision Making**

Self Assessment

Option Exploration

Decision

Plan Implementation

# Stage 1 Self-Assessment

## Ability/Skills

- What subjects did you do particularly well at, at medical school?
- For which skills do you tend to get the most positive feedback?
- Think of a specific work achievement which made you feel really proud. What skills were you using?
- What do your answers tell you about your key abilities and skills?

# Stage 1 Self-Assessment

## Interests

- What SSMs/SSC did you choose at medical school?
- What did you choose to do on your elective?
- When you pick up the BMJ/professional journal – what sort of articles do you read?
- What have your research interests been?
- What out of work activities do you enjoy doing?

## Stage 1: Self-Assessment

### **Work Values**

What is most important to you at work

# Stage 2: Exploring Options -

- <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles>
- The above website has detailed information on each specialty
- <https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/person-specifications/person-specifications-2026>
- The above website has all the most recent person specifications. The healthcare careers website (the first website above) also has the person specifications. BUT – they can be out of date. That is because the date attached to the person specifications is for the time the role starts, not for the time that the applicant applies.
- <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/become-a-psychiatrist>

## BMA Specialty Explorer

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/finding-the-right-role/specialty-explorer>



# Stage 2: Exploring Options

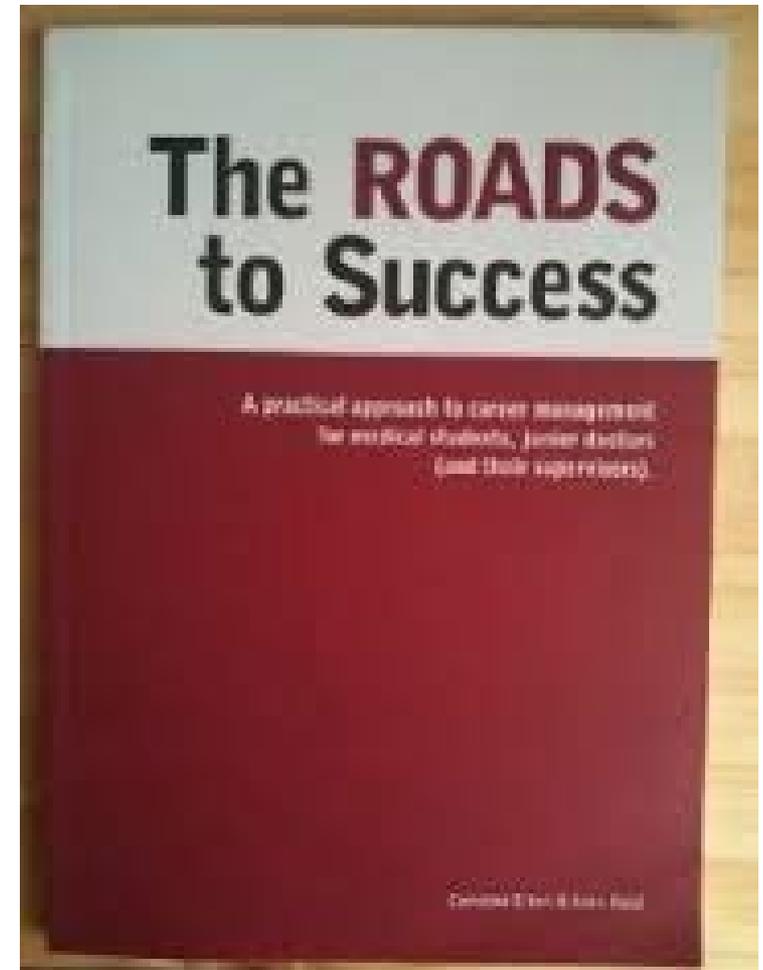
- Identify 2-3 people with whom you need to network
- Work out the specific questions you will be asking them or issues you want to discuss. These questions will link to Stage 1 (self-assessment).
- Within which timescale does this need to be done?

# Stage 3: Decision Making

- Ask your trainee to draw a career lifeline
- Questions for them to consider
- Think about a time when you made a career decision that turned out well. What factors helped you make that decision?
- (You can also identify a time when you made a career decision that didn't turn out so well. Is there anything you can learn from this experience, in order to maximise the chances of making robust career decisions in future?).

## The ROADS checklist: Way of interrogating a career decision

- **Realistic:** Are you being realistic about yourself and about the demands of the job?
- **Opportunities:** Have you given serious consideration to **all** the opportunities available?
- **Anchors:** Have you built in the things that provide support in your life?
- **Development:** How does your decision adequately develop your potential?
- **Stress:** Have you minimised those aspects of work that you find particularly stressful?



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# Stage 4: Plan Implementation

- Written Application Forms
- CVs
- Portfolio Assessment
- Pre interview Visits
- Competency Based Interview Questions
- Presentation
- Selection Centre
- Personality Testing

# Key Point



- If you are not involved in recruitment/selection for your specialty – don't assume you know the current recruitment details.
- Make sure the trainee has checked them out on the relevant Royal College/ website

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# Donald Rumsfeld's 'Unknown Unknowns'



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Rank order the competitiveness of the following ST1/CT1 specialties (2025 data) – from least to most competitive

- A. Core Psychiatry
- B. Community Sexual and Reproductive Health
- C. Core Surgery
- D. GP/Public Health combined training
- E. Paediatrics
- F. IMT

# Rank order of the competitiveness of the following ST1/CT1 specialties (2025 data)

- A. Core Psychiatry (21.83)
- B. Community Sexual and Reproductive Health (98.5)
- C. Core Surgery (8.57)
- D. GP/Public Health combined training (167.15)
- E. Paediatrics (5.63)
- F. IMT (5.27)

**FECABD**

# Hands up if you got the correct order?



# Common approach to career guidance in medicine

If I were  
you.....



# Mike Shooter – Depression. BMJ 2003



Shooter feels his personal experience of mental illness has helped his understanding as a psychiatrist: “I think it has helped knowing what it feels like from inside. I don't foist it on them, but if I feel it is constructive to say to them, ‘I think I have had an experience like yours—for me it felt like this, I wonder if it is the same for you?’”

# Trainees who may need to be referred for specialist careers support

1. Trainees with significant mental and/or physical health issues that are impacting on their training
2. Trainees who are repeatedly failing exams
3. Trainees who are 'failing to thrive'
4. Trainees who are frequently absent
5. Trainees who are contemplating switching specialty or leaving medicine entirely

## Additional Sources of Support

- Practitioner Health Programme
- [Practitioner Health](#)
  
- Dochealth
- [| DocHealth](#)

# Supporting Autistic Doctors

## Autistic Doctors International

- <https://autisticdoctorsinternational.com/>



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