

Sir

**The rise of business culture in the NHS; our consequent loss of
compassionate healthcare ethos**

I write in agreement with Professor Elkeles' thoughts about the dehumanised disarray in our NHS.

I, too, am a veteran NHS doctor. Thoughtful practitioners of my generation are almost always in agreement: the twenty years' development of the 'internal (healthcare) market' has not enlivened, incentivised or optimised procedural treatments, even less compassionate care. With few exceptions it has led, rather, to widespread staff anomie and demoralisation. As both cause and effect to these we have more depersonalised and formulaic care, managed increasingly in ways that are remote, defensive and officious. The business-modelled NHS costs much more, too: a complexly competitive commissioning system of autarkic Trusts etc leads to an explosion of administrative artefacts and artifices. Healthcare is a humanity: science makes great contributions. But a business? We are discovering just how specious and dangerous this misconception can be. How and why we should care for one another far exceeds any business we can manage.

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Letter to The Times

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