



Book review – why we are charmed by psychopaths

In his book, *Psychopath? Why we are charmed by the antihero*, Irish psychiatrist Dr Stephen McWilliams explores how we are somehow seduced by fictional villains and antiheroes.

Many fictional psychopaths are deliberately dislikable; they are the villains in almost every novel, action film or television drama. Some are absurdly comical, some are charming, while others are repulsive. But often enough it is the protagonist himself (or, less often, herself) who is psychopathic. Their nefarious deeds do little to dissuade us from cheering them on; indeed, we seem quite happy to shelve our own moral compasses as we root for them to prevail. Such an antihero needs charisma if we are to remain interested in them.

There are countless literary and cinematic examples. We are seduced by the protagonists in Tarantino and Hitchcock films. We empathise with the talented Mr Ripley and James Bond. And we tremble with glee at Hannibal Lecter's unusual appetites. And yet we often find these damaged people compelling. Dr McWilliams's book is an informative and entertaining dissertation on a disturbing but fascinating phenomenon.

Psychopath? Why we are charmed by the antihero, by Stephen McWilliams, is published by Mercier Press and is available as paperback or eBook. ISBN:978-1-78117-590-3

BEaGP campaign launched in major recruitment drive

The ICGP has launched the 2020 #BEaGP social media campaign to highlight the advantages of a career in general practice.

The campaign, which will run on social media, centres on a series of videos with newly trained and existing GPs about why they chose general practice, on www.beagp.com

The highest ever number of places is available in the 2021 training programme to help meet the growing demand for GPs.

A new category of emergency medicine is now included under expanded recognition of prior learning (RPL) scheme.

The campaign highlights the expanded RPL pathways for graduates to enter general practice. For the first time, those who have completed their core speciality training in emergency medicine will have a full year of training recognised with shortened GP training from four years to three years.

The RPL pathway is also available to those with a BST in Medicine (up to one year recognition), and a BST in

Paediatrics (4-6 months recognition).

According to ICGP national director of training Dr Karena Hanley, the career options in general practice are more numerous and varied than in most other specialties. "The GP is valued within his/her community as someone who really makes a difference to people's lives."

Fintan Foy, ICGP CEO, said the #BEaGP campaign has now been run for three years. "It is a very successful recruitment campaign which has reached out to those interested in having a balanced life as a GP. General practice is a terrific career as Irish healthcare becomes increasingly focused on primary and community-based care."

Key dates for GP training recruitment

Online applications begin on October 14. There will be an information webinar on October 17, and online applications close on November 12.

Further details of the GP trainee recruitment process are available on www.beagp.com

Follow the hashtag #BEaGP on Twitter and Instagram.

College highlights suicide supports for patients and GPs

The ICGP has urged the public to reach out for help if they are suffering from mental health difficulties or have suicidal thoughts and has stressed that College supports are available for GPs who have experienced a suicide in their practice.

Marking the recent World Suicide Prevention Day, ICGP Mental Health programme director Dr Brian Osborne said studies have indicated that levels of depression and anxiety have increased in the general population since the pandemic began.

"Many people are feeling more anxious but we know that speaking to someone, including family and friends, and seeking help does alleviate anxiety levels.

"We as GPs are urging people who are having difficulties with their

mental health or experiencing suicidal thoughts to talk to their GP. There are telephone helplines, online supports and local organisations that may be able to help."

Many GPs experience a suicide in their practice. The ICGP has a range of resources available for members to help support them.

Dr Andrée Rochfort, director of Quality Improvement & Doctors' Health with the ICGP, said: "The ICGP supports colleagues in suicide prevention and we work closely with the National Office for Suicide Prevention.

"A suicide in a practice can have a huge professional and personal impact on a GP. Everyone needs to support the prevention of suicide in Ireland."