

Leadership with a small 'l'

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Towards the end of summer our membership was called to select a group of doctors who are to lead the college through new and tough, yet exciting challenges that lay ahead. Looking back at the past six years I served as college secretary I wonder what went well and what could have been done better. One thing that I feel we should have, are doctors with a sense of leadership, even if they would be leaders without grand visions, or leaders who are intrinsically introverts without fabulous oratory skills.

It appears that leadership insecurity is a common feeling, and many times when I urge colleagues to volunteer for leadership, the most common comment I get is, "I'm not a leader but...". Many times the "but" is something that reveals the individual is, in fact a leader. "But I want to change things in my practice", "but I want to change things to improve the health of..."

We need leaders in primary care who can combine personal humility and professional will, who understand cooperative leadership, they need to allow others to demonstrate their skills and strengths; know when to lead from the front and when to take a back seat and support and encourage their colleagues.

We have many hard working family doctors, who strive to improve their service and the health of the people they care for. The way we are practicing family medicine in our society may need to evolve and adapt to ongoing change.

On the eve of a new year, we are being told that we are on the eve of a reform in primary care. One hopes that whoever has the responsibility to pull this mammoth event through, has the wisdom to appreciate that the long term success of his policy lies in negotiation and not through unilateral imposition.

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