

What brings you Joy in General Practice ? What do you or your practice do that enables you to feel joy in your day at work ?

When I first started asking colleagues this question, the reaction was often a brief silence and then usually a flow of comments, building into a flood.



Life is hard as a GP. We all know this. Our capacity for compassion for our patients, ourselves and our families can be severely impacted by the demands of our patients, the expectations we have of ourselves, and when we neglect connection with our families and friends in favour of work.

Like many of you, whether you will talk about it or not, I have been at the rock bottom of my clinical confidence, self-esteem and energy and am still recovering if I am honest – exploring what brings joy in general practice has been part of reconstructing my resilience.

Accident and Emergency

3 **COMPASSION REDUCES READMISSIONS** When patients are given compassionate care in the ER they are 30% less likely to return to the ER for the same problem (randomized controlled trial)

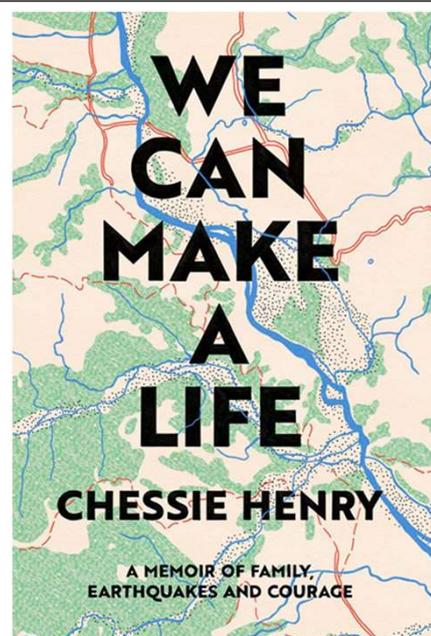
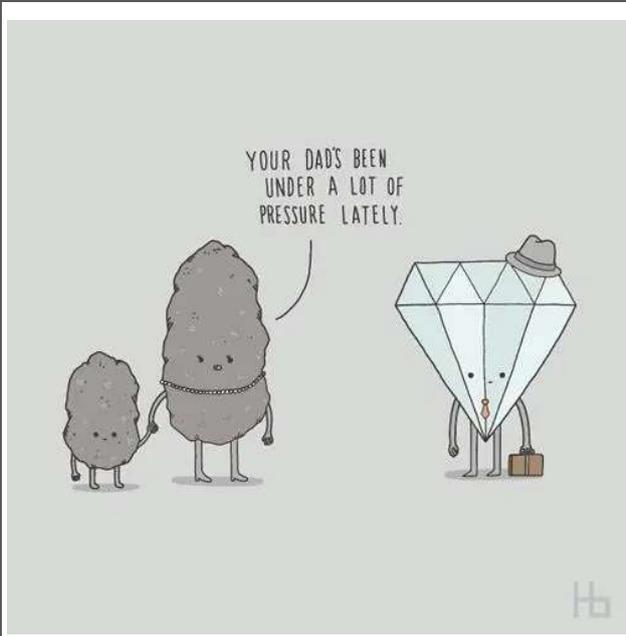
4 **COMPASSION PROLONGS SURVIVAL** Patients with terminal lung cancer with early access to compassionate palliative care have better quality of life, less depression, fewer interventions, reduced cost of care, and survive on average 30% longer (randomized controlled trial)

5 **COMPASSION REDUCES MORTALITY** Having a caring doctor cuts the five-year risk of a heart attack more than aspirin, and reduces overall mortality more than smoking cessation (meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials)

6 **COMPASSION IMPROVES GLUCOSE CONTROL** Diabetic patients who rate their doctors as 'high empathy' have 42% fewer emergency admissions to hospital

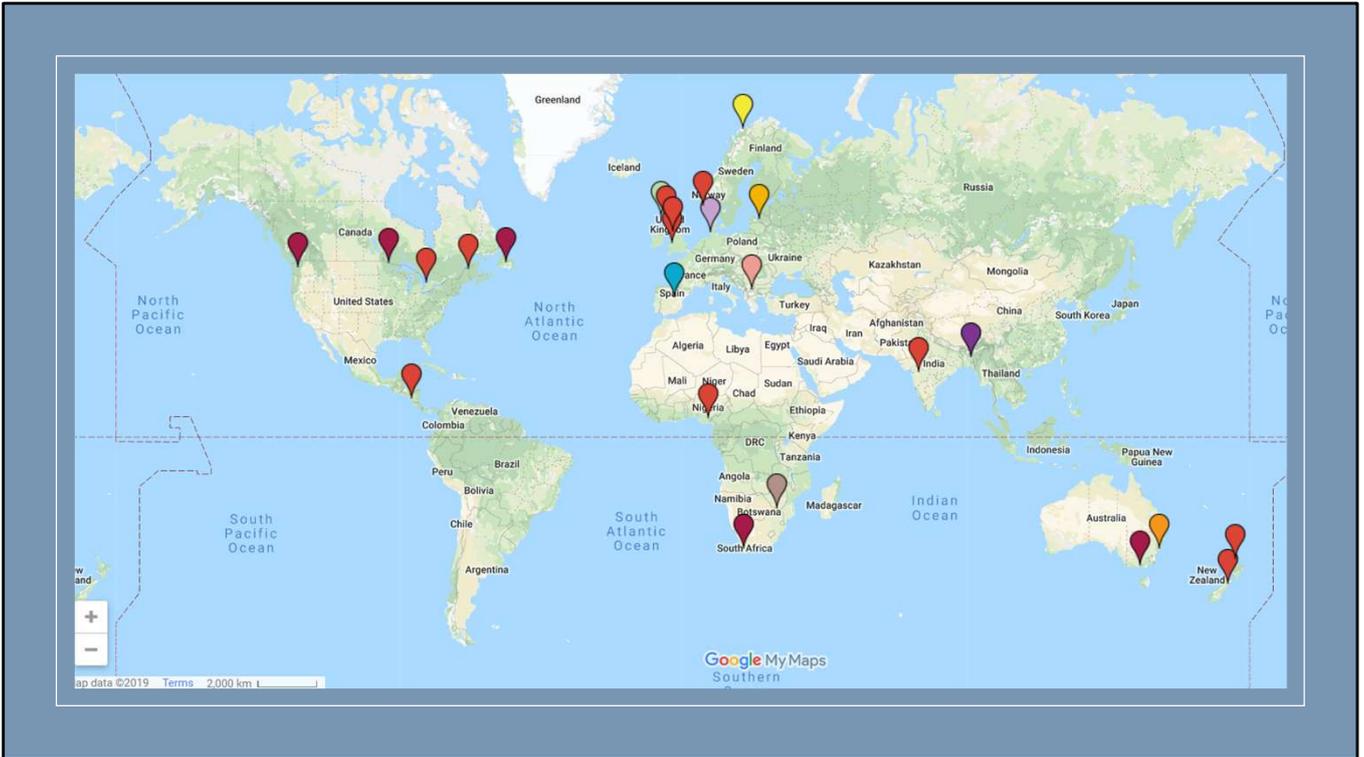
7 **COMPASSION IMPROVES TRAUMA OUTCOMES** Surgical trauma patients who rated their doctor 'high empathy' were twenty times more likely to report good outcomes six weeks after discharge

If we can maintain our compassion, and demonstrate it in our relationships with patients, there is good evidence that it makes a massive difference in health outcomes for the people we seek to serve. Compassionate care has many proven, and some unexpected benefits. In order to display compassion, we have to feel at least contented in ourselves, to really counter the difficulties we face, and supercharge compassion, bring joy to the workplace.



There are many external pressures on us that we have little of no control over. We can seek to change some of those pressures through advocacy, political action, and getting our hands dirty in PHOs, Rural Network, College and other organisations. But this is not the whole answer. It's much more complicated. We have some control over our internal voice, the things we say about ourselves and to ourselves, whilst not the whole picture, is an important part of building our resilience.

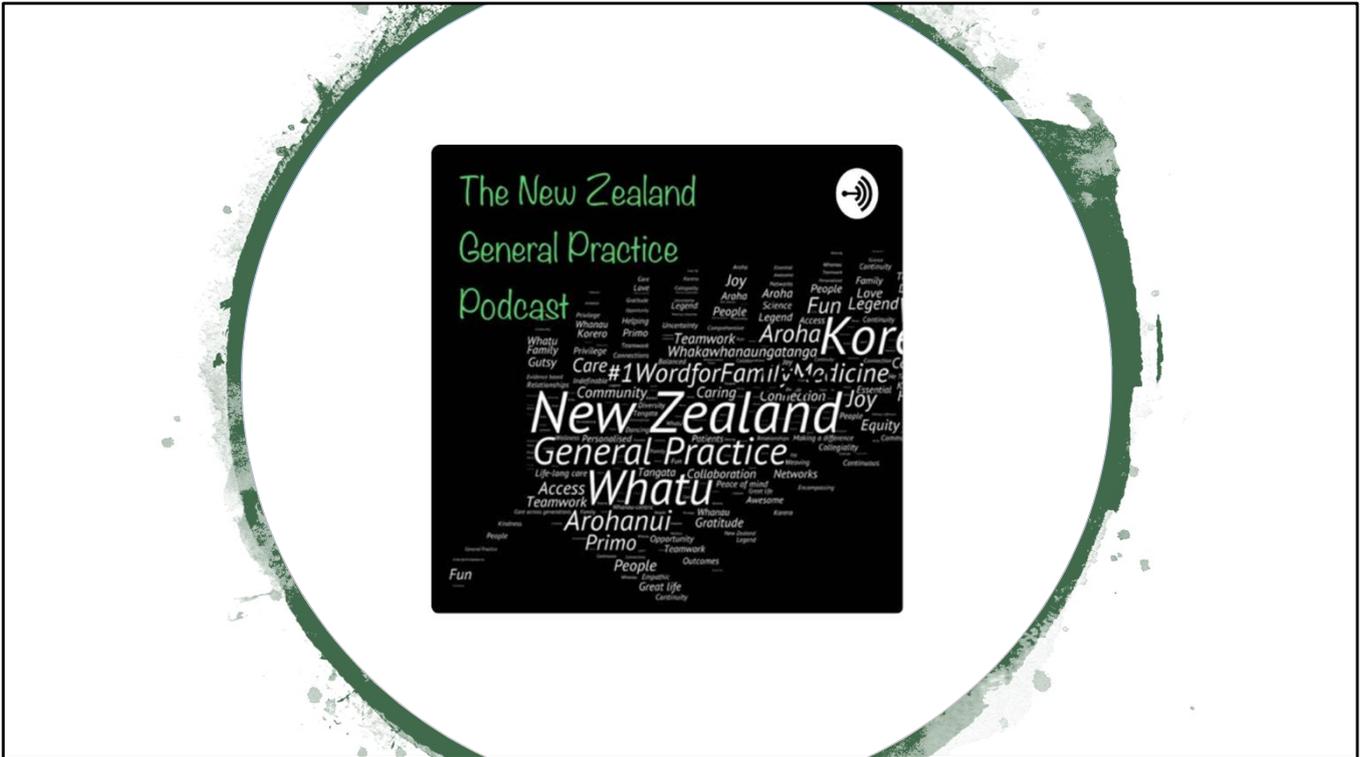
<https://web.colby.edu/cogblog/2015/11/23/under-pressure/>



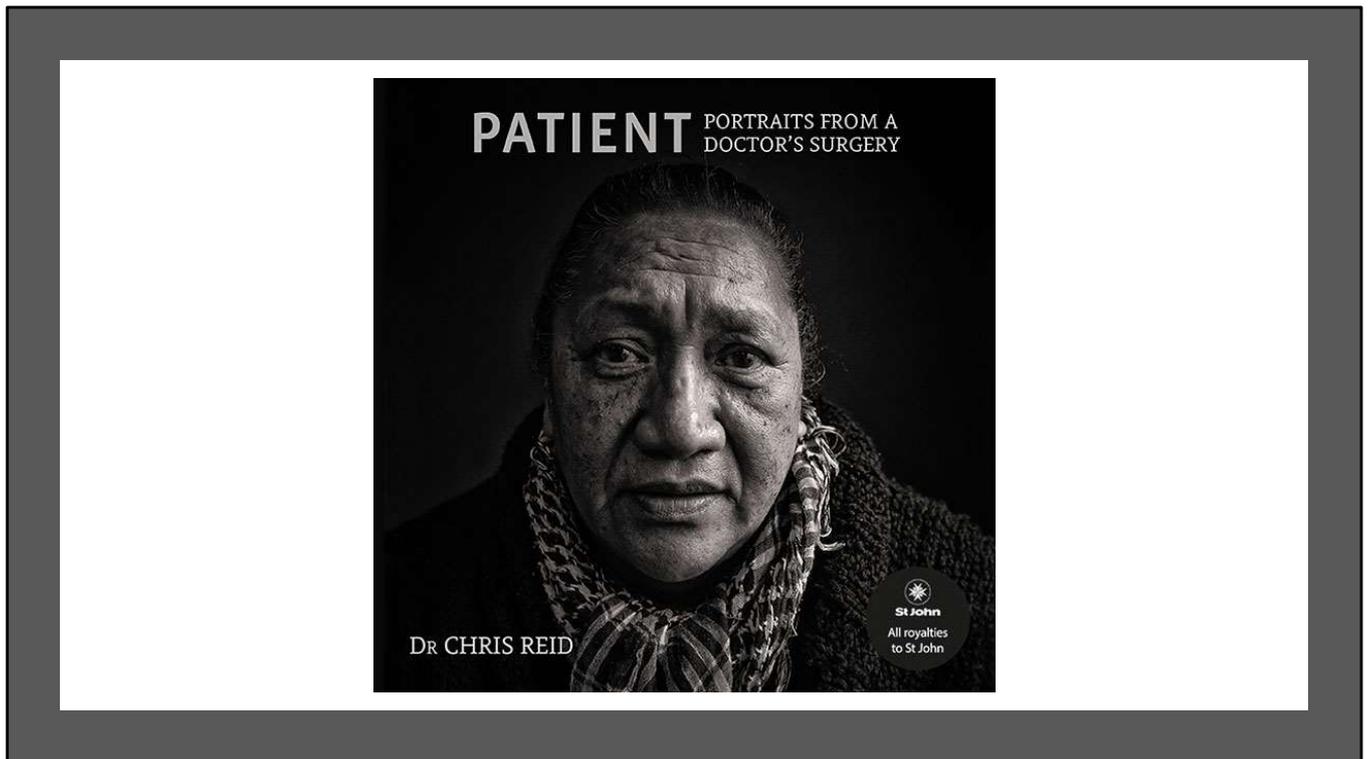
Celebrating our achievements and being celebrated helps build resilience and through involvement in the WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice – an international group of rural GPs who network and undertake advocacy through the WHO, United Nations amongst other things, I’ve had the opportunity to gather stories of “Rural Heroes and Heroines” from around the world, and to share their stories via an online google map. It’s a real joy gathering these stories and helping people share them globally.



I believe articulating our values, putting into words what our profession means helps build our resilience. This word cloud, based on the words that connections over Twitter used to describe Family Medicine in New Zealand, part of the #1Wordforfamilymedicine project, that has collected similar pictures from all over the world, talks about aroha, love, whatu, weaving, and interestingly joy.



A few months ago I started gathering stories from colleagues about what brings them joy in General Practice, asking them what they do that enables them to bring joy into their day and collating that into a podcast which I have rather arrogantly called The New Zealand General Practice Podcast. Sharing the stories of what brings us joy and how we achieve that helps us celebrate, learn from others, and build our resilience.



So what brings joy in general practice? Many of the contributors have talked about the relationship they have with patients, a good day in general practice is when you feel you have made a connection with someone, we do this in a variety of ways – using Te Reo, our humour, silence and touch.



Being part of a highly functioning team, one where we share a sense of purpose and have the ability to grow together and learn from each other rather than one in which people are coming to work because of a feeling that they have a duty, they need the money, or because they don't have the energy to do anything else.



Being part of a team that has a sense of “play” in its work, not just about having fun and socialising, although that’s important, but also a team which gets into its groove when dealing with a crisis, that hums like a well-oiled machine despite the lack of measles vaccine, or when a patient is in acute distress.



Colleagues have reflected on the joy that comes from being the leader of such a team, being able to celebrate the impact their leadership has had on creating that team culture, through investing in fantastic buildings, or leading strategic planning days, through little things like making sure significant events in team members lives, birthdays and anniversaries are acknowledged and celebrated.



The intellectual challenge of General Practice brings joy to some, the problem solving when complex cases present, when a long term convoluted story a patients body and mind has been telling us finally comes to a conclusion and we can help a patient understand what is happening to them, and continue holding their hand as we move on together to whatever comes next.

Tailoring Medication to Fit Your Genes

Making drugs safer and more effective through pharmacogenomics.

Your genes change the way medication works.

50% of people have genetic variants that influence how they process and respond to medications. That can mean either the drug doesn't work or it causes harmful side effects.

Medications may be processed too fast and removed from the body before taking effect.

Medications may be processed too slowly, and build up in the body, causing side effects.

Individuals may be prone to side effects or unintended drug reactions.

What conditions hold the most promise for pharmacogenomics?

Cancer treatment: Targeted therapies aim to attack cancers while minimizing harm to healthy cells.

Pain and psychiatric treatment: These medications need to balance effectiveness with side effects.

Transplants: Immunosuppressants keep the body from rejecting a transplant, but can leave patients vulnerable to infection or rejection.

The right drug at the right dose at the right time.

pharma + co + genomics
(Ule-mo-kid-ib-to-mik-ee),
noun

Pharma 

co 

genomics 

Pharmacogenomics (PGx) is using a person's genetic profile to help prescribe the treatment most likely to be successful at the right dose.

This means getting the most effective treatment for YOU.

The future of pharmacogenomics and you.

Physicians are developing patient genetic profiles to help predict response and guide medication selection and dosage.

Researchers are studying DNA of healthy and diseased cells to build genetic profiles and document drug effectiveness in diseases like cancer and depression.

Available anytime, anywhere, PGx information should be part of everyone's medical record—allowing doctors and pharmacists to personalize treatment, wherever you go.



Pioneering and practicing in the field of pharmacogenomics.

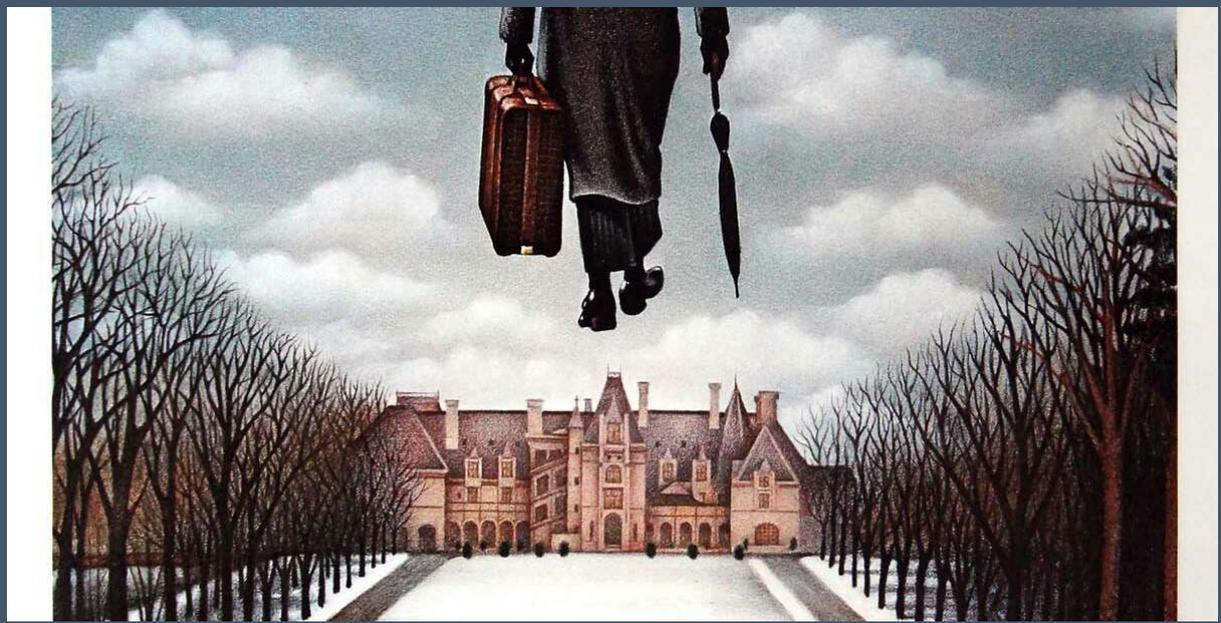
The Mayo Clinic Center for Individualized Medicine (CIM) is transforming health care using new genomic-based tests and treatments that address the unique needs of patients worldwide. Our research in precision medicine helps us better diagnose, safely drug therapies and treatment plans customized to the patient's individual genetic code.

To learn more and request a PGx appointment, visit MayoClinic.org/PGx.

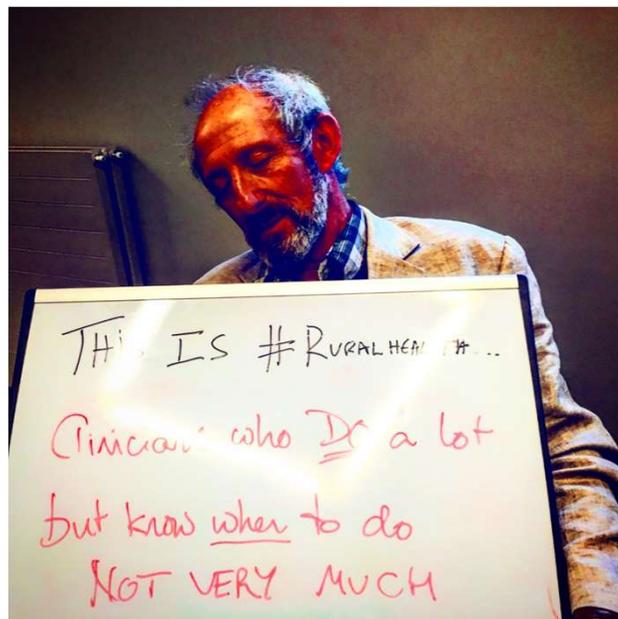
Learning something new every day – the fact that this work is never static, never boring, yes it has boring bits, every job has its insurance forms, but the world of medicine is changing, we have different medications we can use, different tests we can order, different interventions we can undertake now that we did not have even a few years ago. Learning new things supports our wellbeing.



The etymology of doctor – from the Latin “docere” meaning to teach or teacher, shifted in middle English to meaning a learned person. Teaching at all levels is recognised as a source of joy in our days. GPs teach all the time, patients, other staff, and students and registrars, and each other. Sharing wisdom is fun, and we can also take a tiny amount of pride in the achievements, and gratitude of those we have helped in this way.



Being there for people when they are times of trouble, the privilege of being allowed into someone's life, and death. Being comfortable with not solving or curing, but instead content to care and be there with people in their suffering.



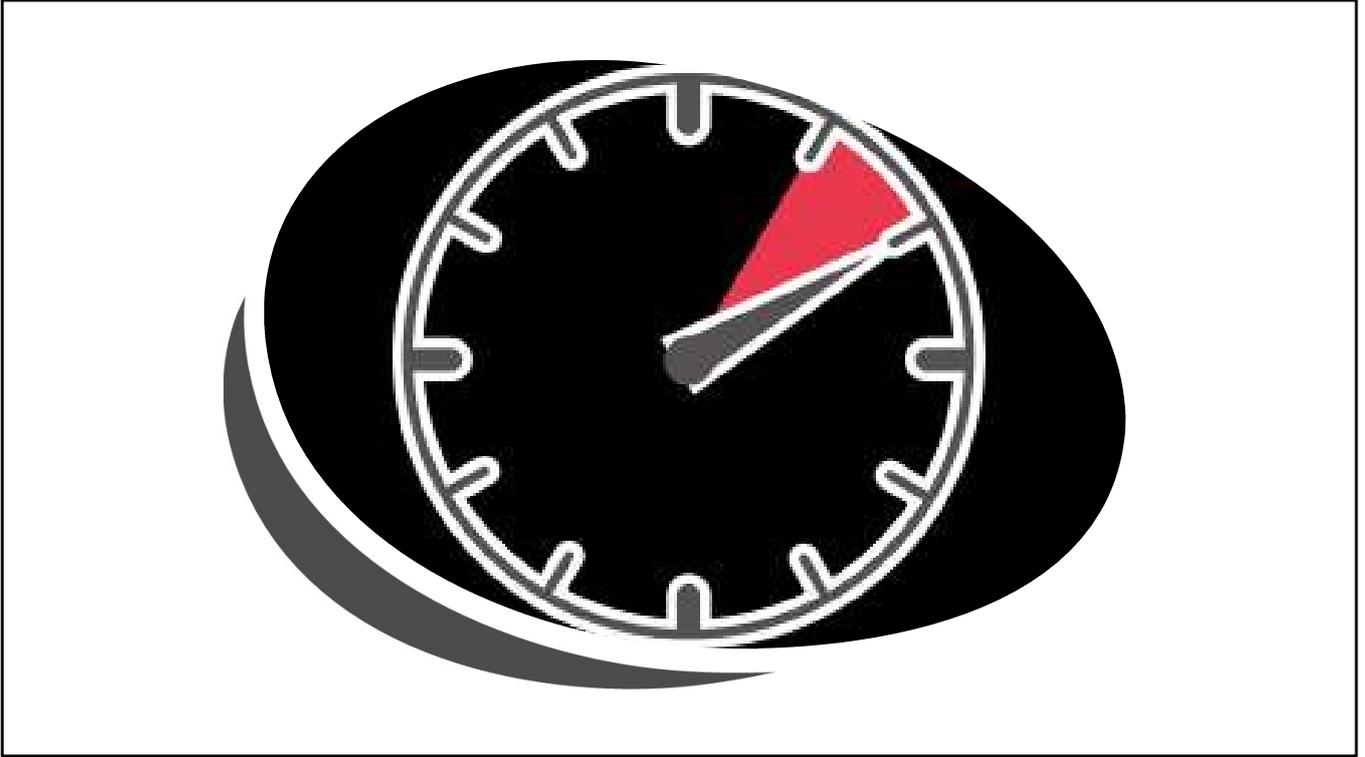
Something many people say brings them joy in practice is the variety of people, conditions, situations and opportunities we have in general practice, not knowing what is coming through the door next, flipping from children with chronic coughs, to adolescents struggling with sexual identity, grieving families, minor surgery to palliative care is a continual challenge, but highly satisfying and never boring.



The work we do is extremely privileged, and the social status, the mana, the financial rewards we receive are recognised as beneficial and offer us opportunities to have overseas holidays, to send our kids to good schools, and live in wonderful homes, something we need to celebrate.



I have been privileged to attend a number of WONCA world rural health conferences, this was Albuquerque in 2019 and gathered more ideas about what brings joy in General Practice from around the world. The stories continue to flow, I don't think that we have reached saturation point yet.



I hope that during this weekend some of you will be prepared to share with me 2-3 minutes of your time to record what brings you joy in general practice, and what you do in your day that enable that joy to flourish.



Thank you for listening.