

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **Patient and Staff Voices in Primary Care: Learning from Dr Ockrim and Her Glasgow Medical Practice.**

***By Kenneth E. Collins***

Hard, softback and e-book 198 pages  
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Kenneth Collins is a retired Scottish general practitioner and medical historian. This book is his distillation of recorded and transcribed oral history interviews conducted by Dr Hetty Ockrim, the author's GP mother, who practiced in a deprived area of Glasgow during the first 40 years of the NHS.

The book begins with a biography of Dr Ockrim and a description of her training, the development of her practice and her written reflections on retirement. The personal details are nicely located within the wider context of the developing role and acceptance of women doctors during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> C.

The book includes a detailed description of the study methodology. A series of semi-structured interviews of 79 former patients and practice staff were recorded between 1989 to 1892. The author's analysis of the interviews forms the main substance of the book. The analysis begins with a consideration of changes in the organisation of Dr Ockrim's Glasgow general practice during the study period. Organisational aspects include appointments, staff, premises, practice records and home visits.

I found the interviewees' observations on the topic of stigma particularly interesting. These included prejudice against former poor-law institutions that morphed into modern NHS hospitals, and the stigmatising effects of poverty, mental illness, tuberculosis, rickets, concealed pregnancy and addiction. Another thought-stimulating chapter covers the marginalisation of certain ethnic groups and women.

The book ends with discussion of a range of clinical topics and reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of oral history. Typically, late twentieth century medical oral history studies have concentrated on the views of eminent doctors; this book is different as the interviewees were ordinary GP patients and practice staff in a deprived urban area. Collins gives a well-written scholarly account that will appeal to readers with an interest in the history of general practice in the early years of the NHS.

**Chris Derrett**  
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