

Those conversations arose from my rage over Hyam Joffe's deplorably one-sided letter to the British Medical Journal, and the economy of truth contained therein. You appeared to agree and recited the litany of the shortcomings in the Trust's performance in paediatric cardiac surgery and your strenuous but unsuccessful efforts to make James Wisheart see the error of his ways - efforts, you said, frustrated by James' total lack of insight into deficiencies in his own performance. You commented, quite rightly on the strength of James' support within the Trust and the difficulty there would be in trying to change anything much more for the better now that matters seemed to be in hand for the future success Trust's paediatric cardiac surgery. You went on further to hope that James' lack of insight was limited to those particular deficiencies, so that it might make sense to occupy James as much as possible with managerial responsibilities and as little as possible with cardiac surgical practice. I must say that if that is the best argument than can be raised, we do indeed have a lame duck Medical Director and, if openness is to rule O.K., that should be recognised.

As I indicated, I am greatly relieved that the General Medical Council is conducting enquiries towards a preliminary hearing. It relieves me of feelings of profound guilt about being unable to do enough to correct a situation that I believe is fundamentally wrong. If the ultimate conclusion is to support the conduct of James and Jenarden and the Trust, I shall be a wiser but a sadder man, and the great and the good will be gladdened that they have supported worthy colleagues through a time of great difficulty. If not, I do hope that there will not be an unseemly scramble of the great and the good to a more comfortable side of the fence.

Yours honestly,