



GP Surgery Opens Its Doors To Channel 5

TV viewers got a peek "behind closed doors" of a south London GP practice in a new series called GPs: Behind Closed Doors which aired on Channel 5 last night.

The four part documentary series which follows GPs and patients at St John’s Medical Centre in Lewisham, south London, includes a behind the scenes look at patient consultations as well as a look at what GPs get up when they are not seeing patients.

The Channel 5 programme, "GPs: Behind Closed Doors", filmed the six of the practice’s doctors and two healthcare practitioners treating some of the 1,400 patients seen at the surgery each week.

The show depicts the pressures and constraints within which GPs have to treat patients – including consultations limited to just 10 minutes and dealing with "approximately 90% of the NHS workload while receiving "less than 10% of the health service’s total budget.

Dr Jean Parker and Dr Chrisanthan Ferdinand (also known as "Dr Ferdy") are experienced GPs and were pleased to let the cameras in to see what their daily work actually entails.

Dr Ferdy said "Our main reasons for doing the show were to generate some positive PR for general practice. The aim was to produce a series that showed what pressures GPs and practices face every day in treating patients with an ever decreasing budget and time constraints and to challenge some of the myths that exist about GPs. Every day is a challenge for us to deliver a high level of patient care as well as balance the high levels of demand that London GPs face. The feedback so far has been extremely positive so I’m glad to have done this and hope the next three episodes prove to be just as illuminating. The makers wanted to produce something that was touching, honest and entertaining, and takes a no-holds-barred look at the stresses, strains and joys of working in – and using – the health service in modern Britain and I think we achieved that as much as we could. It illustrates the variety and types of cases we see but doesn't truly reflect the hard work/hours we put in” Patients featured include Spencer, a recovering addict who comes in with broken ribs, older gentleman James who is in for a check-up and Amanda, who says she cannot work because she keeps falling ill. Other complaints include a refusal to undergo a colostomy, depression and suicidal thoughts and a badly infected foot wound.

The next episode of GPs: Behind Closed Doors will air on Channel 5 on Tuesday 6 May 21.00.

For more information, or to request an interview, contact Elliott Spiteri on 020 7387 2034 ext 239 or email espiteri@lmc.org.uk