

Brian Livesley



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After qualifying at Leeds Medical School, England, and gaining broad general medical experience at University and District Teaching Hospitals, in 1969 he became the Harvey Research Fellow at King's College Hospital Medical School, London. While developing new clinical and laboratory techniques for the study of heart disease and preparing his MD, his teaching was regularly sought and his interests in medical history developed. By January 1973 he had turned away from a proffered senior lecturer post in cardiology with a view to a personal chair and began as consultant geriatrician at the neighbouring St Francis Hospital, Dulwich. There, he took to the bedside of 175 in-patients leadership, diagnostic medicine, and team-building. His careful analysis, of what he described as 'the business he was in', led within a few years to an internationally recognised compassionate clinical service with a teaching and research department developed with minimal funding. His wide-reaching interests included seminal papers on repeated falls; dementia; pressure sores; terminal care for the non-cancer patient, and also under- and post-graduate medical education. Although his work was recognised internationally, he declined well-funded invitations to Chairs abroad. In 1987, the University of London appointed him to bring together general and geriatric medicine in a Foundation Chair at Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School. Despite being given meagre funding (£5,000) with which to develop a new clinical academic department, he negotiated and created para-clinical PhD research and also senior medical lecturer posts as well as new pre-registration and regional registrar training opportunities. These last were the first accepted for dual accreditation in general and geriatric medicine by the Royal College of Physicians. His subsequent multi-segmented department linked clinical care between hospital and community at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. In 1999 and again in 2000, the King's Fund acknowledged his department was a 'Model in Practice'. By this time he had trained professors and others working and publishing abroad in elderly care. Despite physical and legal intimidation, he produced a report on the clinical services in a large nursing home, at the request of his Regional Health Authority, and all its 16 recommendations were accepted. He then extended his healthcare investigative work at the request of various National Police Constabularies and HM Coroners after retiring from his Chair in 2001. He rapidly became an acknowledged and sought after consultant forensic physician registered at the NPIA Bramshill. In 2010, he retired from clinical practice after 50 years in Medicine. His many publications include: special reports by invitation of HM Government, the Department of Health, Regional and Local Health Authorities; several monographs and book chapters; many peer-reviewed research investigations into clinical, scientific, social, historical, and educational problems of medicine in our ageing society; editorials and leading articles by invitation of professional journals; and, also by invitation, more than 100 standard and extended book reviews. In addition to his published collateral, over 50 special and eponymous lectures have been presented to national and international audiences. He has since been a personal tutor within Oxford University and his recent publications have directly affected the provision of care for the dying in England, while he has also continued to suggest corrections to errors in medical history.