

June welcome: Professor Ollie Minton

I am a big fan of opera, even with its improbable coincidences, plot twists and sometimes unnecessary tragedy. The foolhardy prince in Turandot is saved only by the 'heroics' of act 3 (*Nessun Dorma*) – its subsequent crossover into the footballing world zeitgeist at the 1990 World Cup was a surprise. In retrospect it could feel like an AI artifice, but we know came from years of mastering the craft and expert teamwork – plus some inspired marketing with the three tenors.

I make this connection to highlight our interview with Dr Anne Kinderlerer on the RCP view on digital and AI and its conclusion that we all need to find the right application(s) for any new technology, avoiding optimism bias while ensuring live patient-reported outcomes and data are managed with confidence. There are unlikely to be any magic shortcuts. Unsurprisingly AI was also front and centre at Medicine 2026; with reflections from the clinical director for improvement programmes, Dr Aklak Choudhury, sharing his thoughts on where AI fits into neighbourhood health, among other things, and not just waiting for Skynet to be switched on.

While we may yet all embrace the chatbot, the interview is still best done as a human interaction so was great to chat to Dr Dan Furmedge to hear his plans as the newly elected vice president for education and training, what brought him into the college and how he juggles his multiple roles.

I also took the time to talk through the implications of the new Tobacco and Vapes Act and the RCP report on Tobacco, health and social justice – with it being nearly 65 years since we published the landmark Smoking and health in 1962. The tobacco company tactics apparently remain the same in promoting smoking, the cost and health implications are still frightening and of course, it is most likely to start in areas of deprivation – locally and globally. Overall, even if fewer people now smoke than in

the 1960s, we cannot relent in the promotion of smoking cessation services.

Despite the looming AI ubiquity, we are all unique and not everyone though takes the same path through their careers. There is an excellent illustration of this in the piece on specialist, associate specialist and specialty (SAS) doctors, through discussion with four proactive members and fellows who illustrate how you can carve out your niche to be equivalent to your consultant colleagues, without the associated title.

As always, we have our global perspective, including some insights into service provision and innovation with the development of the Pan Arab Woman Physician Association, demonstrating that, with RCP support, medicine is not only a profession, but also a humanitarian mission. This links into developments in Iraq as part of our global educational role – geography, culture and availability of services may differ but, as the 2021 RCP Iraq Network tagline suggests and reinforces, 'Together, we are stronger and smarter'.

Who knows where AI will feed into these global connections, or indeed tagline generation, but anything that offers the opportunity to spread these messages and help people to network can, hopefully, only be a positive thing.

We want to encourage ongoing submissions from across the whole RCP population – from medical students to past presidents – as we approach the 60th anniversary of our magazine later this year. Please do get in touch with ideas – they can be multimedia, but we mainly want your human perspectives. Email commentary@rcp.ac.uk to get involved.

This feature was produced for the June 2026 edition of *Commentary* magazine. You can read a [web-based version](#), which includes images.

