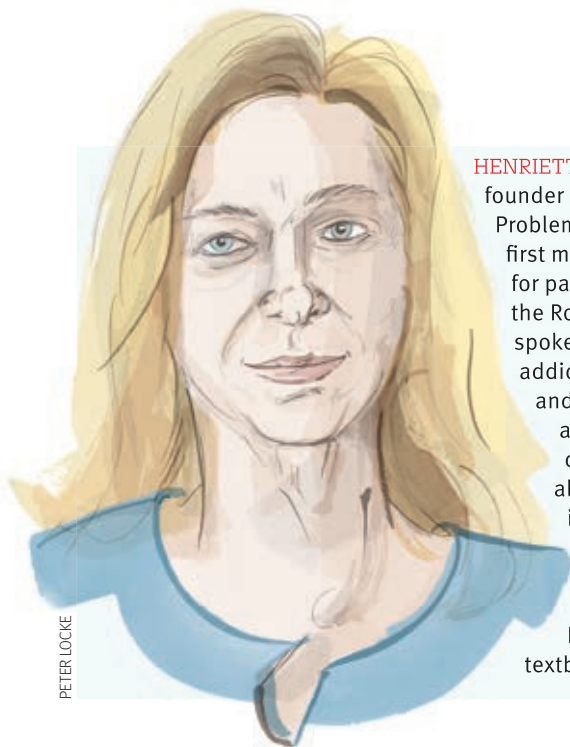


Henrietta Bowden-Jones

Extrovert, optimistic, driven



PETER LOCKE

HENRIETTA BOWDEN-JONES, 50, is founder and director of the National Problem Gambling Clinic, the NHS's first multidisciplinary treatment centre for pathological gamblers, and is the Royal College of Psychiatrists' spokesperson on behavioural addictions. As consultant psychiatrist and honorary senior lecturer at Imperial College London's division of brain sciences she also runs a research group investigating the neurobiology and aetiology of gambling addiction. She is vice president of the Medical Women's Federation and has edited two textbooks on pathological gambling.

What single unheralded change has made the most difference in your field in your lifetime?

"Clinically speaking, atypical antipsychotics have allowed millions of patients to live in the community without the stigma of significant extrapyramidal side effects that marked them out as mentally ill. However, brain neuroimaging techniques have truly revolutionised our field"

What was your earliest ambition?

From primary school age I was an avid reader and also loved Charles Schulz's *Peanuts* cartoons, which I think shaped not only my career path but also my approach to life. Every human problem appears in the comic strip at some point. Lucy became a role model, as I liked her energy and vitality: I decided to become a psychiatrist after reading endless cartoons of her in her little wooden stall, a large "The psychiatrist is in" sign above her head.

What was your best career move?

Two come to mind, both equally important: the first was to move to the United Kingdom from Italy to train in psychiatry, do my junior doctor years and membership exams, and later a neuroscience MD at Imperial College. I loved the meritocracy of the British system where you succeed if you are good. My other best move was founding the National Problem Gambling Clinic, which remains the only designated NHS clinic in the country for treating pathological gamblers.

Who is the person you would most like to thank and why?

Throughout my early medical career in the UK I was mentored by William Shanahan, one of the best clinicians in addiction psychiatry this country has seen.

Where are or were you happiest?

In a tiny medieval village in Italy where I grew up during the summers and where I still go regularly to reconnect with the sea and the Italian way of life. In a village where three generations of close family friends all share a simple life of coffee, newspapers, and swimming, it's easy to forget the professional pressures of London life.

If you were given £1m what would you spend it on?

I'd keep the money in a high interest account and use the interest to set up two prizes. One would be the art of science prize, given to one artist each year who has conveyed a scientific concept through art that manages to remain stunning and challenging. The second would be for scientists who inadvertently achieve beauty in their work—for example, the DNA double helix can be perceived as a work of art in its perfection.

What single unheralded change has made the most difference in your field in your lifetime?

Clinically speaking, atypical antipsychotics have allowed millions of patients to live in the community without the stigma of significant extrapyramidal side effects that marked them out as mentally ill, even when they were in remission. However, brain neuroimaging techniques have truly revolutionised our field, so they possibly come first in terms of historical relevance.

What book should every doctor read?

Two have left their mark, although I read them decades ago: *Notes of an Anatomist* by F González-Crussi and *A Country Doctor's Notebook* by Mikhail Bulgakov.

What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Taking time out at weekends to exercise; I love it and look forward to it. It is total "me" time and therefore not as nurturing to my family as playing with the children, but as they grow up I feel less bad about it.

What is your most treasured possession?

A tiny gold pendant of a pilot cutter sailing boat. My husband gave it to me when I had to sell the real thing—a three tonne classic boat I had bought from Scotland with great enthusiasm, but which turned out to be too large and time consuming to look after because of our busy London lives.

What personal ambition do you still have?

I have just become vice president of the Medical Women's Federation, and one of my ambitions is to increase the membership. We will celebrate 100 years in 2017, and I aim to enrol another 200 women by then. We exist to support female doctors at all levels of their careers (anyone interested should email me at h.bowdenjones@imperial.ac.uk). I have other ambitions too numerous to mention, but they all focus on making life easier for people with mental illness and addiction problems.

Summarise your personality in three words

Extrovert, optimistic, driven. All in equal, large amounts.

Where does alcohol fit into your life?

I am an addictions psychiatrist, and for many years I ran the Central and North West London NHS's detox beds for alcohol dependent patients. Having treated hundreds of people whose lives have been ruined by it, I tend to think of alcohol in clinical terms and in terms of the suffering it has caused to millions of children across the world who have grown up with alcoholic parents—so alcohol is not something I speak lightly about. Minimum pricing and reduced availability are approaches that I support.

What is your pet hate?

Badly written novels sold in airports.

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