

Blogs

Helping doctors make better decisions 23 Aug, 13 | by BMJ Group



I presented my documentary trilogy “At the Doctor’s Side” about family doctors in Switzerland at the [Wonca World conference 2013 in Prague](#).

Each film portrays two protagonists. In the first film, “Gabi & Bruno,” Gabi is an enthusiastic young doctor undertaking her vocational training. Bruno is an experienced family doctor in an independent one doctor practice in the capital of Switzerland. In “Stéphane & Franziska,” Stéphane and Franziska are a married couple practising jointly in a mountain valley. In “Paul & Sébastien,” Paul is the perfect incarnation

of a dying-out breed—the old-fashioned family doctor. Sébastien is a young doctor in a group surgery in the city of Lausanne. They all give an insight into their daily work and talk about their passion for family medicine, but also about its current crisis, their hopes, fears, worries, and their belief in family medicine against all difficulties.

All three films (52 minutes each) were very well attended and well received. Family doctors from all over the world were emotionally touched and recognised themselves in the films. Many participants want to show the films to their students.

What ingredients made the films so appealing and emotive at the conference in Prague and will hopefully also make them well received in cinemas and on TV in Switzerland, and maybe also internationally?

I suppose it is the authenticity of the doctors, the patients, and me. I have been a family doctor for twenty years myself and I know family medicine from an insider’s perspective. This allowed me to obtain the trust that was needed from doctors and patients, and permitted me to participate in their consultations together with a camerawoman and a sound master. It was amazing how naturally doctors and patients behaved despite the presence of the film team which they barely seemed to notice.

Inspired by my GP small group, I decided to reveal how family medicine works in its field of complexity and uncertainty to a wider public. As a medical doctor, social anthropologist, and filmmaker I had the unique possibility to look at family medicine and the interactions between doctors and patients from the inside and the outside. I have a lot of experience in filmmaking, having previously made two other award-winning documentaries. I have learned to capture and portray people and their emotions with the camera.

For this film I visited 30 family doctors throughout Switzerland in different working contexts and finally selected six protagonists. We filmed for twelve weeks; two with each protagonist. 200 hours of film rushes were edited during six months to create three 52 minute films followed by many weeks of postproduction work.

At www.atthedoctorside.ch you can see the trailers just now and the DVDs can be ordered from November onwards.

Sylviane Gindrat was born in Basel. She studied medicine at the university of Lausanne and later social anthropology, and film sciences at the universities of Berne and Zurich. She works as independent film maker, producer, social anthropologist and medical doctor.

You may leave a response but pinging is currently not allowed.