
Zoom On: Stephen Brett, President Elect of the Intensive Care Society



[Dr. Stephen Brett](#)

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Dr. Stephen Brett takes up office as President of the UK's [Intensive Care Society](#) in January 2015. We asked him our 7 questions.

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

I have a very broad interest in the clinical aspects of intensive care research and practice. If pressed, I would say that I am interested in understanding recovery after critical illness, the factors that are involved in the recovery process, and how we can understand these properly and improve longer-term quality of life for patients. This might include everything from understanding who we admit to intensive care, to the human factors involved whilst caring for patients and running an intensive care service, to developing and promoting packages of care for patients who have left the intensive care unit and even the hospital.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

From a clinical perspective I think the major challenge is the availability of resource and capacity, and matching this to the demographic and lifestyle shifts that we see in the populations that we serve, and the changing expectations of our patients, their families, our colleagues and the wider society.

3. What is your top management tip?

Try to understand the drivers for decision-making in the people with whom you interact; the economists sometimes refer to these as "externals".

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

I have been fortunate to have a significant number of very positive events. The most important of these is probably the successful delivery of the clinical guideline "[Rehabilitation after Critical Illness](#)" for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This project involved leading a group of extraordinary people and delivering a report, which ultimately, we hope, will have a major impact on helping people recover after critical illness. Although the progress after the report was published has been slow, I remain optimistic that very gradually this will push things forward.

5. If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

Had I not been successful in getting a place in medical school, I think I would have ended up in the regular army. In the end, I was in the regular army anyway, but as a medical officer.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Outside of medicine I maintain an interest in current affairs, I like to run and cycle and play the guitar to a modest standard; there is something cool about being told to "turn it down" by your teenage son.

7. Your favourite quote?

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The British Army trains all of its officers at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. The motto at Sandhurst is "Serve to Lead". These three simple words encapsulate an entire philosophy, many people could profitably reflect on them.

As head of research for the Directorate of Anaesthetics and Critical Care within Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, Dr. Stephen Brett leads the Centre for Perioperative Medicine and Critical Care Research and Honorary Reader in Critical Care at Imperial College.

In his capacity as chief investigator for a number of clinical studies both locally and nationally, Dr. Brett's personal research interests are in understanding and optimising long-term outcomes after critical illness. He has [published extensively](#).

Dr. Brett serves as council member for the [Intensive Care Society](#), is on the Board of Management for the [Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre](#) and is on the Editorial Board of [Critical Care](#).

Additionally, Dr. Brett serves on a number of Department of Health advisory groups, and provides consultancy to industry in the fields of clinical trial design and supervision, and marketing.

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