Moving morality: developing a Code of Ethics for pharmacy

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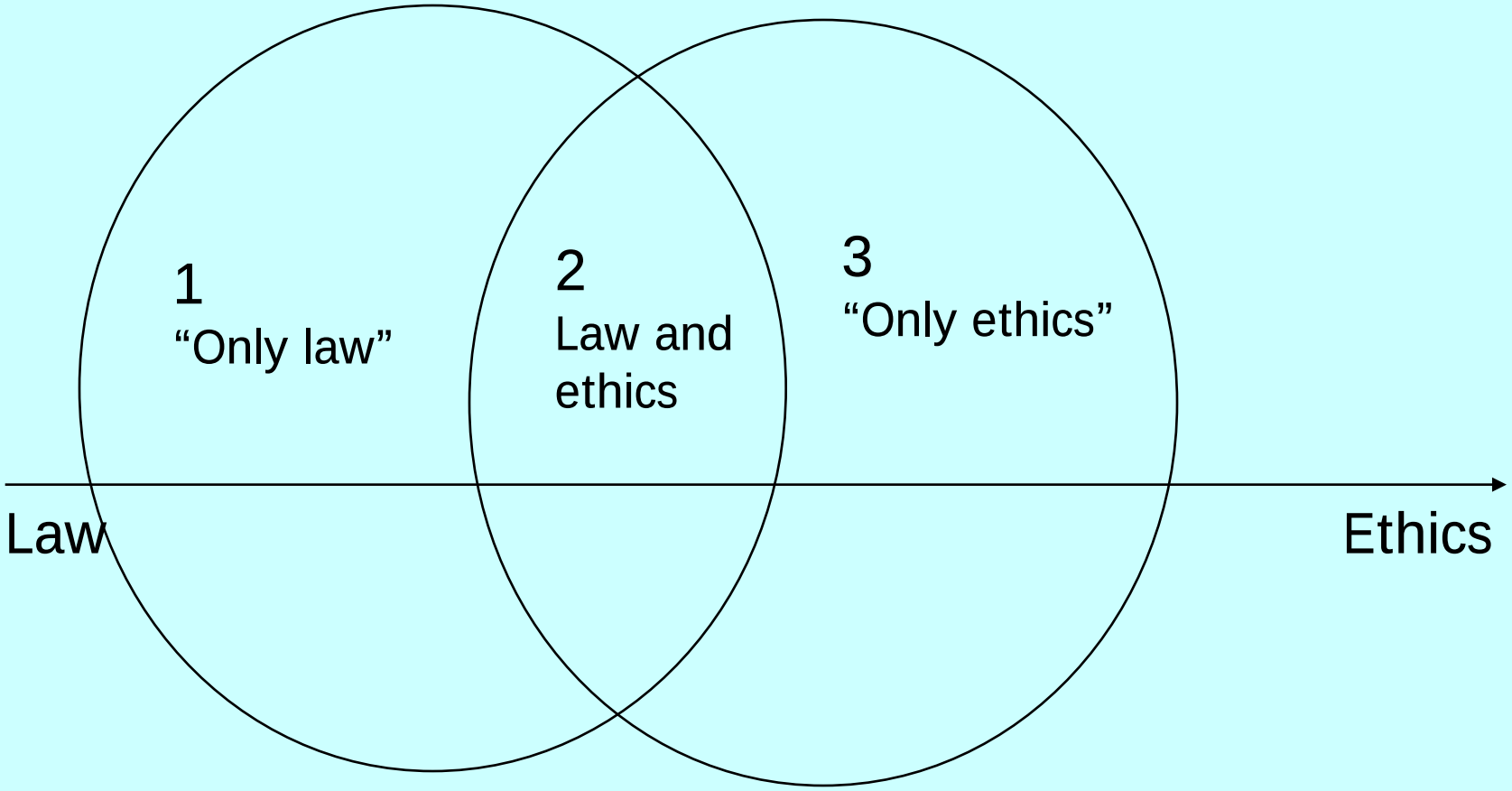
Law versus ethics



Professionalism

OLD

- Learned professions for “gentlemen”
- Law, church, medicine
- Repository of education, power and privilege
- A “vocation”
- Superior technical and moral authority
- Paternalism

NEW

- Partnership
  - With patient
  - With health system and organisations
  - With colleagues
- Promotion of patient autonomy
- Transparency of expectations
- Additional accountability

What the previous generation found 'acceptable' just won't do!
GP Surgery
Come, come now - Doctor knows best . .
Err . . no - if you want to know how I feel - ASK ME!
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Functions of a Code of Ethics

- Express values, attitudes, behaviour – establish the culture and an INTERNAL accountability
- Created by ALL stakeholders
- Set standards, performance, conduct as a condition of registration; right to practise
- Guide (only) as to what's right and wrong
- Values over and above the law? More sticks to beat us with? Blueprint for the unknown? Empower individual pharmacists?

Exercise: What do you think?

- What makes a good professional?
- What expectations does the public have of a good pharmacist?
- What is professionalism?
- To what standards should you be held accountable?
- To what standards should your employer be held accountable?

Legal teeth

Ireland

Pharmacy Act 2007

- Draw up code of conduct
- Professional misconduct a breach of the Code
- Set penalties
- Health Committee
- Immediate suspension

Great Britain

Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians Order 2007

- Standards of conduct
- Define misconduct
- Set penalties
- Health Committee
- Interim Orders

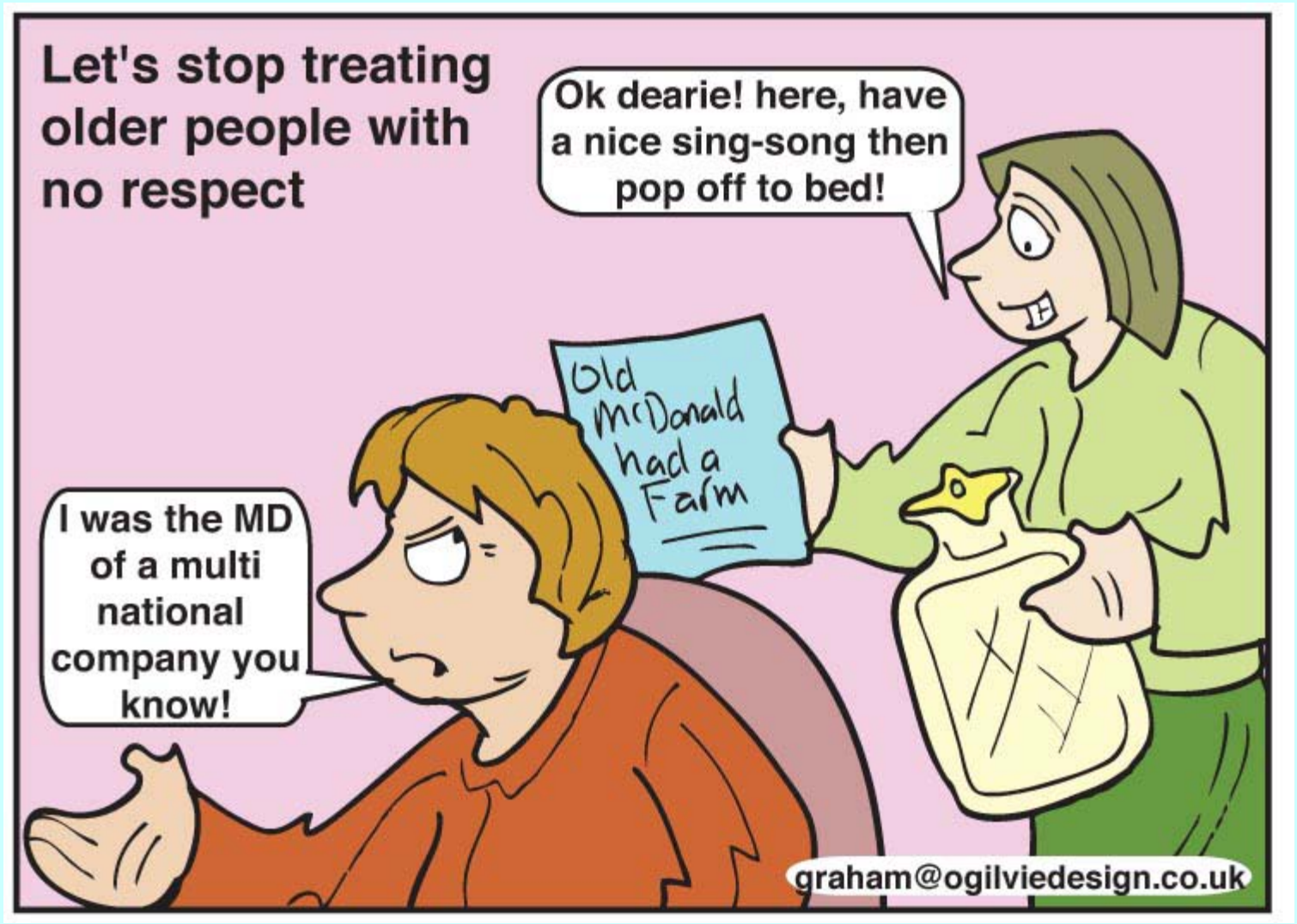
Principles

Ireland

1. Improve patient care
2. Use skills properly
3. Be trusted, respect rights
4. Behave well
5. Maintain competence
6. Comply, help others to comply with, Code

Great Britain

1. Prioritise patient care
2. Exercise judgement
3. Show respect
4. Encourage participation
5. Maintain competence
6. Honest and trusted
7. Responsible for work


Let's stop treating older people with no respect
Ok dearie! here, have a nice sing-song then pop off to bed!
Old McDonald had a Farm
I was the MD of a multi national company you know!
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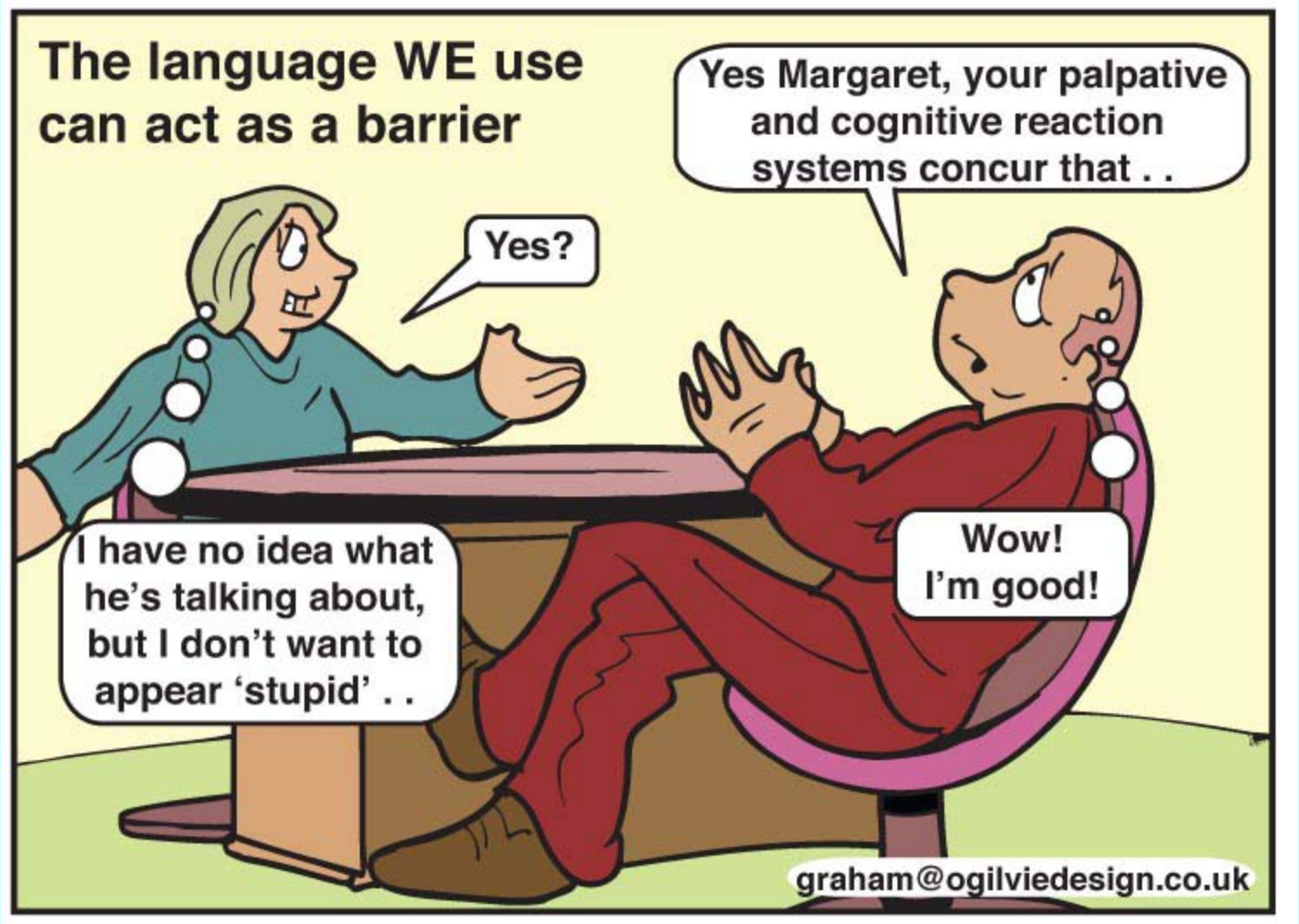
The language WE use can act as a barrier
Yes Margaret, your palpative and cognitive reaction systems concur that . .
Yes?
I have no idea what he's talking about, but I don't want to appear 'stupid' . .
Wow! I'm good!
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Similar forces for change

- Promote autonomy; (limit paternalism); avoid prejudice; protect vulnerable patients
- Provide information, promote participation in decisions and choice
- Respect confidentiality, privacy, dignity
- Professionalism - virtue approach
- Accept accountability, avoid conflicts of interest, ensure professional autonomy
- Professional indemnity

Distinctions?

- Submission to competition authority
- Consent
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Societal requirements; health resources
- Leadership, develop health policy
- Educate and train colleagues
- Promoting patient entitlements

Embedding professional values, attitudes and behaviours

- Selection of pharmacy students
- Fitness to practise, code of conduct, registration (?) of students and pre-registration pharmacists
- Pedagogical success? What works?
- Research findings
- Raising awareness and ethical sensitivity