

Mr M. C. T. Morrison

**15 Prospect Hill
Swindon Wilts.
SN1 3JU
Tel. 01793 644610**

The Editor
BON

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Dear Mike,

Medical Secretaries

I was interested, disappointed and somewhat dismayed to read John Powell's article (Issue 42 Winter 2009) about the state of secretarial support – or lack of it – in orthopaedic departments around the country.

It was reassuring to read that some Trusts had 'reassessed' their policies of 'outsourcing' secretarial work. However, it is worrying to be made aware of other Trusts who cannot see the error of their ways.

I am sure that most consultants, not just orthopaedic surgeons, would agree that a good secretary (not just a typist) is essential to ease their administrative burden and so allow them to concentrate on clinical concerns. This not only makes the consultant (and, indeed the whole department) work more efficiently, but it is also 'cost-effective' – which is supposed to be one of the 'targets' so beloved by all Trusts.

However, in the current climate, if we value something we must be prepared to fight for it. So, come on colleagues – to the barricades and bombard the bureaucrats with the 'evidence' of examples of the clinical errors or computer catastrophes wrought by their managerial myths!

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Morrison
Past President of the British Society of Medical Secretaries
Retired Orthopaedic Surgeon