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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## UK doctors' drink/drug problem

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**14 June, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **UK doctors' drink/drug problem**

**BNE:** British doctors and nurses have an alcohol and drug problem. This is according to research carried out by reporters for a BBC television documentary. The programme said that one in 15 doctors and nurses, about 13,000 in total, has an addiction. The BBC found that in the past decade, 750 medical staff have been disciplined for being drunk while on duty. Medical bosses in the UK said doctors and nurses must start seeking help if they have a problem with alcohol.

Reporters also discovered that the British medical profession has no clear rules about doctors drinking alcohol. Guidelines are necessary so doctors know how much they are allowed to drink before going to work. The British Medical Association's Dr. Vivienne Nathanson warned that doctors who drink or take drugs seriously affect levels of patient care. She added: "Doctors work in very stressful environments in a culture where it is difficult to seek help."

## WARM-UPS

**1. DRUNK ON DUTY:** Have you ever gone to school or work while you were drunk? Have you ever drunk alcohol at school or work? Have you ever come across someone drunk in his/her job? Talk with your partner(s) about alcohol and drugs in the workplace / school. What would you do if you found these people drunk?

- Your dentist
- The pilot of your airplane
- The cashier at the bank
- A police officer
- Your English teacher
- The doctor about to operate on you
- The repair person fixing your gas cooker
- The photographer at your wedding

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*British doctors / BBC TV / alcohol / drug addiction / nurses / being drunk at work / rules / seeking help / stress at work / stressful jobs*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. DOCTOR:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with doctors. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**4. DRUNK DOCTORS OPINIONS:** Talk with your partner(s) about these opinions. Do you agree or disagree with them?

- Doctors are human. It's OK for them to drink too much occasionally.
- Doctors should never alcohol.
- Being a doctor is stressful. They need to drink.
- A doctor who is drunk at work should be banned from medicine for life.
- Doctors are crazy to become alcoholics. They know the damage alcohol causes.
- Alcoholic doctors are probably only in Britain.
- All medical staff should be breath tested before they start working.
- There are many jobs more stressful than a doctor's.

**5. STRESS:** Which of these jobs do you think are stressful? What are the stresses in each job?

- |                       |                    |          |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| - English teacher     | - Doctor           | - Lawyer |
| - Hairdresser         | - F1 racing driver | - Actor  |
| - Supermarket cashier | - U.S. President   | - Artist |

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. British doctors are unhappy because they cannot drink alcohol.     | T / F |
| b. One in 15 British doctors and nurses has a drink or drugs problem. | T / F |
| c. In ten years, 7,500 UK medical staff have been disciplined.        | T / F |
| d. Medical bosses said doctors with a problem should seek help.       | T / F |
| e. There are very strict rules for doctors in British hospitals.      | T / F |
| f. Doctors understand alcohol. No guidelines are necessary.           | T / F |
| g. A medical official said patient care could never be affected.      | T / F |
| h. The same official said doctors work in a supportive environment.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. alcohol      | found          |
| b. carried out  | surroundings   |
| c. disciplined  | chiefs         |
| d. bosses       | conducted      |
| e. help         | understandable |
| f. discovered   | drink          |
| g. clear        | rules          |
| h. guidelines   | dangerously    |
| i. seriously    | counseling     |
| j. environments | punished       |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| a. an alcohol and            | help         |
| b. according to              | environments |
| c. in the past               | decade       |
| d. drunk while               | research     |
| e. must start seeking        | rules        |
| f. British medical           | drug problem |
| g. clear                     | to drink     |
| h. how much they are allowed | care         |
| i. levels of patient         | profession   |
| j. stressful                 | on duty      |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### UK doctors' drink/drug problem

**BNE:** British doctors and nurses have an alcohol and drug \_\_\_\_\_. This is according to research \_\_\_\_\_ out by \_\_\_\_\_ for a BBC television \_\_\_\_\_. The programme said that one in 15 doctors and nurses, about 13,000 in \_\_\_\_\_, has an addiction. The BBC found that in the past \_\_\_\_\_, 750 medical staff have been disciplined for being drunk while on \_\_\_\_\_. Medical bosses in the UK said doctors and nurses must start seeking \_\_\_\_\_ if they have a problem with alcohol.

*documentary*  
*help*  
*carried*  
*total*  
*problem*  
*duty*  
*decade*  
*reporters*

Reporters also \_\_\_\_\_ that the British medical profession has no \_\_\_\_\_ rules about doctors drinking alcohol. \_\_\_\_\_ are necessary so doctors know how much they are allowed to drink before going to \_\_\_\_\_. The British Medical Association's Dr. Vivienne Nathanson \_\_\_\_\_ that doctors who drink or take drugs \_\_\_\_\_ affect levels of patient \_\_\_\_\_. She added: "Doctors work in very stressful environments in a \_\_\_\_\_ where it is difficult to seek help."

*culture*  
*clear*  
*seriously*  
*guidelines*  
*warned*  
*discovered*  
*work*  
*care*

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**medical**' and '**profession**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT DOCTORS SURVEY:** In pairs / groups write down questions about doctors and nurses.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| • British     | • medical profession     |
| • documentary | • guidelines             |
| • one         | • allowed                |
| • decade      | • warned                 |
| • duty        | • patient care           |
| • seeking     | • stressful environments |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Were you surprised when you saw this headline?
- b. What do you think about this news?
- c. What do you think about British doctors?
- d. What is your opinion of the medical profession?
- e. Are you happy with the doctors in your country?
- f. What country do you think has the best medical profession?
- g. Have you ever met a bad doctor?
- h. Should a doctor who is drunk at work be banned for life?
- i. Who's to blame for doctors being drunk on duty, the doctors, the hospitals or the medical profession?
- j. Should the rules be the same for general doctors and surgeons?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. Do you think it's OK for doctors to go to work with a hangover?
- c. What kind of rules about alcohol do you think doctors should stick to?
- d. Would you like to be a doctor?
- e. What do you think are the stresses in a doctor's job?
- f. What would you do if your doctor smelled of alcohol?
- g. Do you think alcoholism among doctors is something new?
- h. Is it worse for a doctor or a nurse to be drunk while on duty?
- i. Why do you think it is so difficult for doctors to seek help?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**STRESS COUNSELOR:** You are a stress counselor for people in stressful jobs. It is your job to (1) write down the stresses involved in two jobs, (2) give a score from 1 to 10 for each type of stress (10 = most stressful) and (3) recommend ways of reducing stress. Discuss your ideas with the other counselors in your group and write them in the table. Students A talk together about doctors and English teachers, Students B talk about the US President and artists.

JOB	STRESSES	1-10	WAYS OF REDUCING STRESS
Doctor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
English teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

JOB	STRESSES	1-10	WAYS OF REDUCING STRESS
US President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
Artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>

Change partners so that Students A talk to Students B. Explain what you discussed with your previous partner(s). Give each other feedback on your counseling ideas. Are they good or bad? Will the ways of reducing stress work well?

Return to your original partners and talk about any changes you made.



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### UK doctors' drink/drug problem

**BNE:** British doctors and nurses have an \_\_\_\_\_ problem. This is according to research \_\_\_\_\_ reporters for a BBC television documentary. The programme said that one in 15 doctors and nurses, about \_\_\_\_\_, has an addiction. The BBC found that in \_\_\_\_\_, 750 medical staff have been disciplined for being drunk while on duty. Medical bosses in the UK said doctors and nurses must \_\_\_\_\_ if they have a problem with alcohol.

Reporters also \_\_\_\_\_ the British medical profession has \_\_\_\_\_ about doctors drinking alcohol. Guidelines are necessary so doctors know how much they are \_\_\_\_\_ before going to work. The British Medical Association's Dr. Vivienne Nathanson \_\_\_\_\_ doctors who drink or take drugs seriously affect levels of patient care. She added: "Doctors work in very stressful environments in a culture where it is \_\_\_\_\_."

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the BBC documentary and its report on British doctors. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. STRESS:** Write about the stresses involved in your job. What do you do to cope with or alleviate the stress? Explain to your classmates what you wrote in your next lesson. Do you have similar stresses and ways of coping?

**4. A LETTER:** Write a letter to the British Medical Association. Tell it what you think of the situation in which one in 15 of its medical staff has drink and drug problems. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. alcohol      | drink          |
| b. carried out  | conducted      |
| c. disciplined  | punished       |
| d. bosses       | chiefs         |
| e. help         | counseling     |
| f. discovered   | found          |
| g. clear        | understandable |
| h. guidelines   | rules          |
| i. seriously    | dangerously    |
| j. environments | surroundings   |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| a. an alcohol and            | drug problem |
| b. according to              | research     |
| c. in the past               | decade       |
| d. drunk while               | on duty      |
| e. must start seeking        | help         |
| f. British medical           | profession   |
| g. clear                     | rules        |
| h. how much they are allowed | to drink     |
| i. levels of patient         | care         |
| j. stressful                 | environments |

### GAP FILL:

#### UK doctors' drink/drug problem

**BNE:** British doctors and nurses have an alcohol and drug **problem**. This is according to research **carried** out by **reporters** for a BBC television **documentary**. The programme said that one in 15 doctors and nurses, about 13,000 in **total**, has an addiction. The BBC found that in the past **decade**, 750 medical staff have been disciplined for being drunk while on **duty**. Medical bosses in the UK said doctors and nurses must start seeking **help** if they have a problem with alcohol.

Reporters also **discovered** that the British medical profession has no **clear** rules about doctors drinking alcohol. **Guidelines** are necessary so doctors know how much they are allowed to drink before going to **work**. The British Medical Association's Dr. Vivienne Nathanson **warned** that doctors who drink or take drugs **seriously** affect levels of patient **care**. She added: "Doctors work in very stressful environments in a **culture** where it is difficult to seek help."