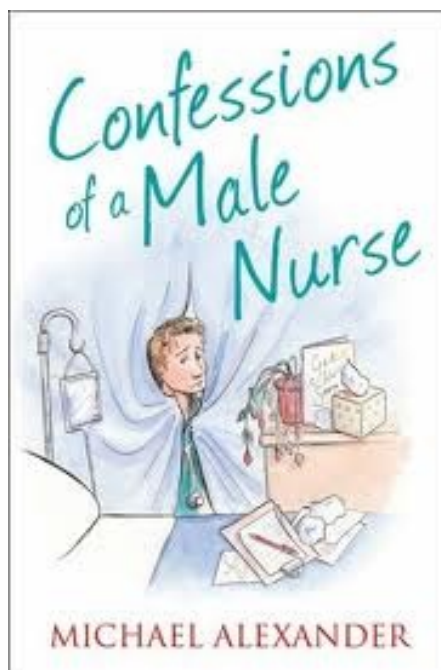




Confessions of a Male Nurse

Michael Alexander

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From the people who brought you the bestselling Confessions of a GP.

From stampeding nudes to inebriated teenagers, young nurse Michael Alexander never really knew what he was getting himself into. But now, sixteen years since he was first launched into his nursing career – as the only man in a gynaecology ward – he's pretty much dealt with everything: Body parts that come off in his hands; Teenagers with phantom pregnancies; Doctors unable to tell the difference between their left and right; Violent drunks; Singing relatives; Sexism; . . . and a whole lot of nudity.

Confessions of a Male Nurse is a touching, shocking and frequently hilarious account of one man's life in nursing.

Confessions of a Male Nurse Details

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From Reader Review Confessions of a Male Nurse for online ebook

Jenni says

Confessions of a Male Nurse follows in the footsteps of books like Confessions of a GP and Life and Death on the Streets to chronicle the real-life experiences of a male nurse while he worked in both the UK and New Zealand. The book is split into short chapters dealing with one patient or one setting, and this makes the book very easy and quick to read. Perfect if you don't want to be tied to reading a book for several days; it's also easy to put down and pick up again without having to go back over parts of the story.

Whilst I enjoyed reading Confessions of a Male Nurse, it wasn't as humorous as I would have liked it to be, especially considering it's marketed as frequently hilarious. There were some points when I had a little smile but nothing caused me to laugh out loud. There was also a lack of deep, emotional stories; at no point did I feel that the nurse was particularly affected by what he had seen on an emotional level. He did show frustration at the state of the NHS and some of the situations he was put in but if you are looking for a tell-all on the state of the National Health Service this isn't the book for you.

Overall Confessions of a Male Nurse was an enjoyable quick read. I would recommend it if you like similar books in this genre or fancy something light to read but if you are looking for real humour or an expose, you are going to be left wanting.

Mark says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. An easy read which made me laugh, cry, reflect and laugh some more. This book has deepened my already existing respect and understanding of the nursing profession, dealing with the everyday social aspects and problems of life. The job is not only about changing dressings and wiping bums. I salute all nurses out there trying to make a change in people's lives whilst battling against formidable working conditions.

Jennifer Hummer says

Confessions of a Male Nurse is not what I thought it would be. For some reason, I expected this book to be funny, light and occasionally hilarious. That was my pre-conceived notion of a male nurse rearing its ugly head and I'm happy to say I got it all wrong. Michael Alexander as nurse, may have been a novelty a decade or so ago, but that didn't mean he capitalized on it. Breaking into the formerly women-dominated vocation was frightening and bewildering at times, and the author does a good job showing us why. By now, most of us understand how hard it was for women to break into the male-dominated work force and it's refreshing to see the tables turned.

Then, there is the down and dirty side of hospitals. People's toes falling off and morphine addicted heart-transplant patients are just two of the medical stories Alexander delivers. Not having a stone stomach about bodies and their flaws in general, I had to skip a few of these stories. If I was hesitant of hospitals before, I'm now petrified. Happily, however, after reading Alexander's book I'm a bit more respectful of nurses. It behooves anyone who is about to have a syringe shoved into their butt to show a bit of respect, does it not?

Covers are tricky and subjective in general. But I wish this one had better reflected the book. The cartoonish

picture just doesn't accurately express the contents. On the other hand, it may be smart marketing. After all, it was that pre-concieved notion of hilariousness that got me, a major non-fan of medical pain, to read a book about male nurses in the first place.

India says

Alexander has compiled a life's work into a collection of hilarious, amusing, eye-opening and sometimes tragic stories. From the beginning of his career as a young male nurse on a gyneacological ward to an interesting stint on a mental health unit, he tells the truth about nursing. This book wasn't just a good read, but it has changed the way I view nursing. It also outlines the differences between nursing in the UK and nursing in New Zealand.

Whatever your reasons for reading this book it will entertain you and keep you hooked from the start and it will, most certainly, make you laugh out loud.

Steelwhisper says

A heartwarming, lovely little book which I bought 1) as a bit of research and 2) to get away from those many books about the Great War I've been reading lately.

This is well-written, a fast and yet at times quite intense story of a deeply caring bloke who happens to be a male nurse. I often laughed out loud, sometimes I hitched up with some of the harsher stories, I certainly learned some new things about nurses and it engendered respect and also reinforced a healthily sceptic look at hospital life and doctors.

I will certainly re-read this at some point in time, it didn't take me long to get through, but I will be thinking for a while about this. What more do you want? What more could you want of a book?

Very well done.

Fiona MacDonald says

I'm really enjoying these 'Confessions' books. Always full of humour but interesting too and I found I've learnt a thing or two after reading the things this guy has written. He's certainly the sort of doctor I wouldn't mind having!

Grammar*Kitten says

I bought *Confessions of a Male Nurse* after reading and thoroughly enjoying the highly amusing *Confessions of a GP*, thinking that it would be the same type of funny extracts.

It started promisingly, making me chortle out loud a few times within the first few chapters, but after that, I found this memoir to be a little depressing. It focused a lot on the negative side of nursing, the sad stories of

patients and the futile nature of nurses trying to do their best to help people when there aren't the resources for them to give them the care they actually need. It's by no means a bad book - it is well written and should be taken as a cry for help from the profession in general; it gives an insight into the difficulties of doing a job that a lot of people don't appreciate as much as they perhaps should.

While I wouldn't necessarily recommend this for people looking for a light hearted recreational read (I'd see *Confessions of a GP* for that), I would recommend it as a more serious study into the idea of how healthcare professionals actually tick.

Louise Armstrong says

This is marketed as a funny read, but there is much in it to make your blood run cold. I so hope I never need a hospital. The way government employees are treated is the new slavery, but it has such serious consequences in nursing. We are told of a man who died because he did not get basic nursing care, and this fits in with my own observations that if you have a dramatic accident, you get the best of care, but if you just need boring looking after then tough. But isn't it a scandal? Questions should be asked in parliament, but basic nursing is boring, so nobody cares.

Simon Howard says

Confessions of a Male Nurse is a sequel of sorts to the successful *Confessions of a GP*, by Benjamin Daniels. It has a broadly similar epistolary structure, which lends itself well to a series of anecdotes on connected themes.

Confessions of a Male Nurse is a volume that may hold particular interest to those interested in comparisons between the NHS and other healthcare systems. The protagonist is trained in New Zealand, and spends much of the book practising there, but also spends some years in the NHS in London. Unfortunately, I didn't feel that the differences were pulled out very clearly in the narrative, which felt like a lost opportunity.

In both *Confessions of a GP* and this volume, the protagonists admit some ethically dodgy behaviour. In *GP*, these felt like genuine dilemmas, and made me appreciate the reasons behind the course of action taken – even when I didn't agree with them. The confessions in *Male Nurse*, however, were of a wholly different type. The behaviour of the protagonist often struck me as entirely inappropriate, and the justifications for it were poor. For example, there are several anecdotes in which nursing colleagues are providing wholly substandard care, and causing bodily harm to patients. Our protagonist reasons that, as a bank nurse, he shouldn't complain or he won't get work in the institution again. And so, the appalling behaviour continues.

I would like to think that I would not do the same. I've never been a bank nurse, but I have been a junior doctor, and I have – particularly when patients have come to harm – reported incidents in which colleagues have made errors. I've reported incidents involving senior colleagues on at least two occasions. This isn't done in a vindictive way. It isn't done with the intention of assigning guilt. It is done to ensure that incidents in which patients are harmed are fully investigated, and prevented from re-occurring. It may be, for example, that the harm caused to patients in the anecdotes in *Male Nurse* are not caused by callous individuals, but by a system that is creating dangerous under-staffing, or perhaps by personal issues affecting an individual. Brushing the problem under the carpet and failing to take any action whatsoever perpetuates the problem.

To report such incidents is my duty. I've always been aware that doing so might make my life more difficult,

and I've never done so without discussing it first with the people involved. It made me very uncomfortable to read of someone else protecting themselves before both their patients. But, on the other hand, I guess this is important. If this behaviour is common in hospitals, it is important that we understand it better to prevent it continuing. Perhaps this book shines a light on behaviour that we ought to better understand. Perhaps it offers elucidation of a problem that we should look into further. I'm not sure.

If we put that issue to one side, then the book is quite entertaining. There were moments of frustration where the author's explanation of diseases and medical procedures were a little out of kilter with reality, but – by and large – the descriptions were pretty good. The narrative structure was a little uncertain, seemingly varying between an epistolary form relating individual anecdotes, and a more formal chronological description of events across chapters, and there were consequently times where I felt a little lost within the narrative superstructure, unsure whether we were in London or New Zealand. But this isn't a bad book, and I don't feel it deserves harsh criticism. I'm just not absolutely sure I'd recommend it.

Note: This review was originally published on Simon Howard's blog. It can be seen at <http://sjhoward.co.uk/archive/2013/05....>

Huw Rhys says

Not the light hearted titillation that the title may have suggested to some of us.

This is more of a diary of a nurse who happens to be male, highlighting some of his, generally, more stressful moments over the course of his career.

It's interesting enough reading, as an insight into a profession we're all aware of but, for most of us, have never really been given access to the finer points of it.

It would probably make good source material for some episodes of "Casualty" - but that's about as risqué as it gets for those who may have been expecting something a little more akin to a 1970's hospital romp!

Petra X says

I finished the book. Throughout the book, the author does his level best to never touch female genitalia despite being told by charge nurses that it is part of nursing, it is part of his job. At one point he says that female nurses are sometimes asked to put a penis into a urinal by a man who wants his junk handling, and they will do it with sharp forceps to teach the patient a lesson, he could do no such thing to a female. Can you imagine a woman with problems involving the genitalia thinking it could be fun to ask a male nurse to have a quick feel? The mind boggles!

At the end though the author admits the charge nurse was right, nursing is nursing whether it is a male or female patient. But says there is one thing he would never ever do and that is catheterise a woman. I've never had a female do it, only male doctors when I was anaesthetised. Why can a male deliver a baby but not stick a tube up a urethra?

He is now married with kids and works in Switzerland as a school nurse. If it isn't an all-boys school, I do think he would be wise to stay away from girlie genitals there, maybe that's why he chose it.

The book was quite well-written, and wasn't a bad book. Perhaps a man reading it wouldn't be so struck by the misogyny or repulsion of the female genitalia as I was. It wasn't terribly interesting though. It had nothing new to say about nursing, hospitals or patients. So three star, middle of the road.

Update At last the book comes to an anecdote of the author looking after a female patient. I think he chose it because he said, "There are some things a male nurse ought not to be asked to do." A woman has had an amputation of her leg and it has become infected with MRSA. She is mostly nursed by the junior nurse on the two-nurse ward as the author doesn't seem to like her endless gossip and says that the junior nurse does (she doesn't but she is the junior and such is life). The patient thinks the MRSA has spread to her clitoris. Exit author. Is he really a misogynist or repulsed by women's genitalia or what? How come he didn't do any obstetric training - I thought all nurses had to do that.

In any case when you are giving birth you no longer have a) private parts and b) a vagina. The doctors say things like, "You don't mind if some students examine you?" (I was in University College Hospital in London, a teaching hospital) and almost before you can answer, a gloved hand thrusts itself up your 'birth canal' to see how dilated your cervix is and then a discussion (interesting) follows about how soon you might be going to give birth. Later, the procedure will be repeated by midwives, obstetricians, nurses and students. I was in labour in the hospital for 13 hours and was checked at least once an hour. How the author would have coped with that I don't know. For the almost-mother it's a bit disconcerting to have one's private parts become such a public highway, but hey ho, there you go and here comes baby now.

The first chapter had me raising my eyebrows, sucking my teeth and thinking what a special snowflake the author is. He is assigned to a gynaecological ward and has to insert a voltaren suppository into a patient's anus. He tells his charge nurse that he's only ever done that to men. She says that one bottom is much like another and he's a nurse! He writes, "Somehow during my student training I had managed to avoid having to go near women's private parts." Wtf? It sounds like he was repulsed by them and that there must have been a certain sympathy with that point of view for his tutors not to make sure he understood that nursing was about caring for sick people, not just doing the jobs he felt were appropriate for his gender.

The author goes on to say that he lubed up his finger and with the charge nurse helping hold up the lady's bottom he goes to do the job but his finger is so lubed up the suppository ends up "in the wrong hole". Hole? In this context, a medical one, I would have thought 'vagina' was more appropriate.

The charge nurse (who the author hates and says is persecuted by her) says to get it out quickly and tells him, "You're a nurse now, " but he writes, "There were some things a man should not do and this was one of them." However the charge nurse insists and he says he takes a deep breath and then hooks his finger in and takes out the suppository. He hates the charge nurse even more after she tells the other nurses about it and everyone laughs.

If his attitude was general, there would be no male obstetricians, gynaecologists, urologists or even GPs. No male EMTs either who might have to deliver babies. Maybe he should go and work in Saudi Arabia where he could restrict himself to penises and never have to touch another vulva.

Books that make me suck my teeth make me dislike the author sometimes, but they don't put me off the book unless it's badly written, and so far this one is quite readable.

Ethan Martin says

Probably accurate vision of my future ...

Jenny says

hi michael! i really loved your book and I can really relate to it because as of right now i am a student nurse. So i was wondering if its not any bother to you i am hoping if i could get an interview you for our school paper in our nursing journal organization so if you ever read this i hope you agree and we could communicate through email... so yeah (sorry fro rambling). anyways the book that you wrote motivated and inspired me more to work harder so with that I am very grateful and thank you so much

Mary Elizabeth Morton says

NURSES ROCK!!!

Lainy says

Time taken to read - 1 day

Pages - 320

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Blurb from Goodreads

From the people who brought you the bestselling Confessions of a GP.

From stampeding nudes to inebriated teenagers, young nurse Michael Alexander never really knew what he was getting himself into. But now, sixteen years since he was first launched into his nursing career – as the only man in a gynaecology ward – he's pretty much dealt with everything: Body parts that come off in his hands; Teenagers with phantom pregnancies; Doctors unable to tell the difference between their left and right; Violent drunks; Singing relatives; Sexism; . . . and a whole lot of nudity.

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My Review

I love reading the "Confessions of A" type books but I think this is my first nurse style one. The author takes us through situations from just qualifying to being an experienced nurse dealing with patients and situations across the nursing fields.

The book has some humour, sheds light on just how scary nursing can actually be and some of the high and low lights of what nurses have to endure. The author puts some of their feelings and thoughts on particular situations or patients which I think may cause a bit of a stir with some readers. I think these kind of books give regular Joe public a glimpse into some of the things they may not think of or consider in that line of work. Even for people who work in specific areas in nursing get a glimpse into fields they may not have considered or worked in before.

The chapters are short which I always love, makes for easy reading and you can pick it up and down as desired or get through it rapidly, always a bonus for me. The writing style is very relaxed which again makes for easy reading. I really enjoyed the book and could have read much more, 4/5 for me and I would read more by this author.
