



LETTERS

PEPPA PIG AND USE OF PRIMARY CARE RESOURCES

“Curious George Goes to the Hospital”: teaching toddlers how good healthcare worksLuca Bartolini *child neurologist*

Clinical Epilepsy Section and Division of Neuroimmunology and Neurovirology, National Institutes of Health, 10 Center Drive, Bethesda, MD 20814-1408, USA

I found Bell's paper on Peppa Pig both amusing and deep.¹ As the father of a 3 year old girl I'd like to discuss an episode of *Curious George* titled “Curious George Goes to the Hospital,” which is a positive example of how hospitals and diseases can be effectively explained to toddlers without resorting to magic or sugar coated scenarios.²

The story starts when George inadvertently ingests a piece of a jigsaw puzzle and develops belly pain. After being evaluated by Dr Baker, George is brought to the hospital and a barium swallow reveals that the piece is stuck in the oesophagus, so the little monkey needs to be admitted.

He shares a hospital room with several children: Dave, who's getting a blood transfusion (maybe for leukaemia); Steve, who fractured his leg and moves around in a wheelchair; Betsy, who is admitted because she is very sad and doesn't smile anymore (maybe a major depressive episode).

George has a gastroscopy with Dr Baker, and the piece is removed. When George recovers from anaesthesia, he starts to entertain everybody with all sorts of mischief. After stealing a

wheelchair, he runs down the ramp to the floor below and crashes right in the middle of the lunch carts, which had been brought to celebrate a visit from the mayor. Betsy bursts into laughter, soon followed by everybody else. The mayor praises George for curing Betsy, and she consoles George, who feels guilty for having ruined the party.

The message that this story so effectively delivers is that you can explain to young children what hospitals are, what doctors and nurses do, and even what serious diseases are in a way that is both realistic and amusing and teaches them how a good healthcare system should work.

Competing interests: None declared.

Full response at: <http://www.bmj.com/content/359/bmj.j5397/rr-8>.

- 1 Bell C. Does *Peppa Pig* encourage inappropriate use of primary care resources? *BMJ* 2017;359:j5397. doi:10.1136/bmj.j539729229662
- 2 Rey HA, Rey M. *Curious George goes to the hospital*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1966.

Published by the BMJ Publishing Group Limited. For permission to use (where not already granted under a licence) please go to <http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions>