

# Farewell, Dr Finlay

By **Alan Roden**  
Scottish Political Reporter

IT would have been unheard of in Doctor Finlay's day.

The medical patriarchy that has existed north of the Border for generations has finally come to an end.

There are now more female GPs than male working in Scotland. Figures published yesterday showed that 50.7 per cent of the country's doctors are now women.

The sexual revolution has been brought about by a surge in the number of young women applying to medical schools.

The turnaround is expected to precipitate a dramatic change in NHS working practices.

Many female doctors also want to bring up a family, meaning surgeries will have to engage locums for

## Old order overturned as female GPs in Scotland outnumber men for first time

maternity cover. And with many women GPs choosing to work part-time, there are fears of an impending staffing crisis unless more men take up medicine.

Yesterday, equality groups hailed the figures as a positive step for patients, offering women more choice over the sex of their doctor.

Karen Dargo, from 'anti-sexist' group Engender, said: 'The news is primarily a result of the NHS offering the flexibility of part-time working to employees.'

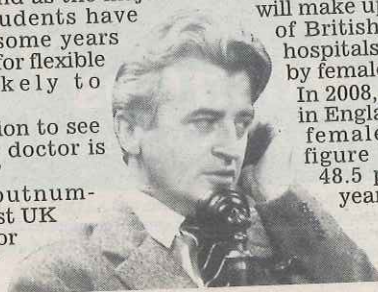
'Retaining women GPs after they

have become mothers makes economic sense and as the majority of medical students have been female for some years now, the demand for flexible working is likely to increase.

'Having the option to see a male or female doctor is good for all of us.'

Women have outnumbered men in most UK medical schools for years - currently by three to two.

Last year, the Royal College of Physicians forecast that women will make up the vast majority of British GPs by 2013 and hospitals will be dominated by female doctors by 2017. In 2008, 45 per cent of GPs in England and Wales were female; the equivalent figure for Scotland was 48.5 per cent. But last year it hit 50.7 per cent,



**Bill Simpson:**  
TV's Dr Finlay

with 2,505 female doctors compared to 2,436 males.

It is a trend that is likely to continue as full-time male GPs retire and leave behind a workforce of younger women, many working part-time.

Public Health Minister Shona Robison said yesterday: 'We welcome the increase in female GPs in Scotland, which indicates that general practice can be an attractive career choice for women.'

A spokesman for the British Medical Association said: 'Becoming a GP seems to be very popular with women but there are some specialities in surgery which remain male-dominated.'

Recent research found that women make safer doctors than men. It found that they take a more caring and cautious approach to medicine.

[a.roden@dailymail.co.uk](mailto:a.roden@dailymail.co.uk)

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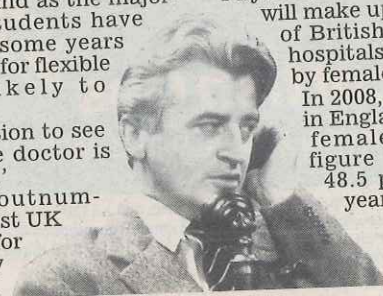
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