

From The Times
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Doctors' orders

Sir, It was refreshing to read your informed account of the issues surrounding the NHS consultants' contract (report, April 19). The only person who thought the contract would increase productivity was Alan Milburn, then the Secretary of State for Health.

Despite the evidence of independent surveys showing that the average consultant worked 50 hours a week, he boasted that he would get more work out of us by "imposing" a 40-hour week. Either Mr Milburn is mathematically challenged or, more likely, his socialist preconceptions would not allow him to believe that consultants really did work that hard. The result was inevitable, and we are now under pressure to reduce our hours in order to bail out cash-strapped trusts.

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