

# DATA PREDICTS

**Katherine Brown**

Part of

# WRITING THE FUTURE

Writing the Future, the world's largest health short story prize, is brought to you by Kaleidoscope Health & Care.

Inspired by science fiction, entries considered how health and healthcare in the UK will look in the year 2100.

The prize was won by Elizabeth Ingram-Wallace with her story 'Opsnizing Dad', and was published along with the five other shortlisted stories in October 2017.

At a time of reflecting on where healthcare has been, a further set of longlisted stories was published in the summer of 2018 to coincide with the NHS' 70th birthday.

All of the published stories are available on the Kaleidoscope website, along with the option to buy a limited edition hard copy of the six shortlisted stories.

Find out more at

[kaleidoscope.healthcare/health2100](http://kaleidoscope.healthcare/health2100)

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## **About Kaleidoscope Health & Care**

**Kaleidoscope brings people together to improve health and care.**

**We find new ways to overcome old barriers. We enable constructive conversations on difficult topics, using inspiring events to encourage clarity of purpose and rigorous problem-solving. Our approach to collaboration is systematic, evidence-based and cost-effective.**

**Our services enable you to collaborate with rigour. We provide everything required to support effective connections, conversations and networks, from design to management to events. We provide consultancy to help you resolve complex issues through practical, sustainable changes.**

**As a not-for-profit organisation, we seek to work with our clients in a spirit of kindness, trust, and openness. Our multi-disciplinary team includes clinicians, policy makers, managers, specialists in communication and digital technology, and more.**

**Could we help you to solve your problems? If so, get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.**

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**The future is...  
not just ours  
to control**

**T**he pretty, blonde woman behind the counter smiled at Mr. Mackay as his number was called. He approached the counter as instructed. The man next to him was shouting at his hologram, which was identical to his own. They were all identical.

“DATA has predicted that you have a health problem that requires a full body scan,” said the other gentlemen’s hologram. “You have required this scan for six weeks. You now have sufficient funds to pay for it.”

“Those funds are for our family vacation,” said the man. “We need a holiday.”

“DATA has overridden the allocation of those funds.” Mr Mackay stopped walking as several robotic arms descended from the ceiling and clamped around the man. Another injected something into his neck causing him to go limp and stop fighting. Another pressed the man’s thumb against an ID pad and processed the payment. Mr Mackay carried on towards his counter.

“Mr. Mackay, why have you come to visit us today?” The voice of his hologram echoed and she flickered again.

“You tell me. My car brought me here instead of to my meeting?” said Mr. Mackay. The hologram smiled.

“Processing...processing...processing.” Mr Mackay tuned out while DATA tried to figure out

whatever it was the algorithms had seen to prompt an urgent and ‘much needed’ trip to see The Doctors. Mr. Mackay glanced at the unconscious man beside him who was now being slowly taken away on an automated gurney. He dared to look at a few other people in the room. He wasn’t particularly worried about the cost of why he was here; he could tell everyone else though was deeply concerned that DATA was about to steal their money from them because of whatever predicted problem DATA had decided was more important.

DATA always knows best.

“Processing...” Mr Mackay looked back at his hologram, which was taking longer than normal to decide. Mr Mackay kept his face straight. He heard a few small escaped gasps behind him. He looked behind.

An ambulance had just pulled up; a woman in a strait jacket, literally clamped to a wheelchair was wheeled out and into the medical centre. She was as white as a ghost and was struggling against the constraints. Mr Mackay kept looking just long enough to read the word ‘Depression’, which had been stamped on her forehead. As it wasn’t an illness with easily recognisable physical symptoms, like say a tumour, DATA had obviously decided the patient needed to be labelled properly so that the correct treatment was administered and the problem wasn’t ignored.

Having been brought here by an ambulance, no doubt sent by DATA, she was given priority and wheeled automatically to the now free counter space beside him.

“Processing...” said his hologram. Mr Mackay kept his eyes fixed on his hologram as a feeling of dread welled up in his stomach.

“You have been diagnosed with Depression,” said the hologram next to him. “We are here to help you.”

“I don’t have depression,” said the woman.

“Denial is a symptom of Depression. You have been diagnosed because you ate chocolate last night, outside of your normal predicted consumption. Last night you also failed to laugh at the scheduled comedy programming.”

“It wasn’t funny.”

“DATA indicates that laughter was predicted to occur. You also slept for ten minutes longer than normal this morning. Tiredness and the inability to get out of bed regularly are also symptoms.” said the hologram. “You have been diagnosed with Depression. We are here to help you.”

“Please, I don’t have depression,” said the woman. “I was feeling a bit sad, but that isn’t Depression.”

“A happy population is a healthy population. We are here to help you. Treatment for your abnormal brain chemistry will commence immediately.” Mr

Mackay closed his eyes as he heard the whir of her automated wheelchair taking her away.

“Diarrhoea,” said his hologram. It jolted him back into focus.

“I don’t have diarrhoea,” he said.

“It has been predicted that you will. You have a meeting scheduled at Westfield Construction site at 10am this morning.” Mr Mackay glanced at the wall behind the hologram, which indicated the time. It was half eleven now. “At this location there has been a reported case of bacterial infection. Your meeting coincides with a predicted bowel movement.” Mr Mackay had been to the toilet prior to leaving home. He wasn’t sure whether to be grateful or not that DATA hadn’t been watching. “You have been deemed at risk of illness. Treatment to be dispensed in advance. A healthy population is a happy population.”

“Dispense,” said Mr Mackay. He pressed his thumb onto the ID scanner to process the payment.

“Instructions of how to take the medication will be automatically given to you via your DATA connection,” said his hologram. A small drawer opened in front of him, containing a small box of tablets. There was no label, just a barcode for DATA to use later to confirm he was taking the pills from the correct box. “Have a nice day Mr Mackay.” He took the box and left the Medical Centre as quickly as possible.

His car door opened automatically for him as he approached, and he got in, securing his seatbelt himself before DATA did it for him.

“Destination?”

“Home,” he said.

“You are scheduled to currently be in a meeting at Westfield Construction site,” said his car.

“Override, take me home.”

“Denied. You are a mandatory member of this meeting.”

“Override, medical discretion. The meeting will be over by the time I arrive,” said Mr Mackay.

“Denied. DATA has accessed that with current traffic levels you will arrive for the final two minutes of the scheduled meeting.” The car set off, and Mr Mackay knew there was no point in arguing. The car glided smoothly through the automated traffic, towards his destination.

He arrived at the construction site, to see his colleagues leaving the ‘scheduled’ meeting early. “You have arrived at your destination for you meeting.” His seatbelt came off and the door opened. He got out before DATA made him get out. The door closed and his boss approached him.

“You didn’t get granted medical leave for not being here then?” he asked.

**“No,” said Mr Mackay; it meant the meeting would be invalid as he, as a mandatory member of the planning committee hadn’t been able to attend. Naturally.**

**He looked at his watch, and his car door opened when the time ticked over to when DATA knew the scheduled meeting to be over.**

**“Come on a bicycle next time,” whispered his boss. “DATA says we aren’t all available for another three weeks to meet again.”**

**“Meaning we will miss this year’s last construction window,” said Mr Mackay. His boss rose his eyebrows. They got into their respective vehicles.**

**“Destination?” Mr Mackay almost wondered why it was asking. He knew exactly where he was going to be taken.**

**“Home,” he said.**

**“Destination overridden; you are required to report to a Medical Centre,” said his car.**

**“Which department?”**

**“Refunds.”**

**“Fine,” said Mr Mackay. He looked at the site; it was going to be a hospital. The first hospital planned for forty years to be solely controlled by human doctors. A site with facilities in place for the builders. Facilities DATA wouldn’t allocate resources to clean**

because no-one was here yet. He wondered just briefly who the poor sucker with bowel problems had been who had been brought here to relieve themselves.

Mr Mackay arrived at the Medical Centre, and joined the short queue outside of people scanning their unneeded medication back into the system. Mr Mackay allowed himself just a quick glance at the back door, which you could see from this queue. He'd been summoned to the front earlier. The back door wasn't a way you wanted to be taken into the Medical Centre.

He waited patiently, because to do otherwise was to argue, which was futile. DATA always knows best.

## **About the author**

**My name is Katherine Brown, and I am a novelist, blogger and occasional screenwriter. I am currently planning and writing a series of books about immortality, fighting the injustices of societies and fighting against those that would seek to destroy the world.**

**My blog 'A Young Writer's Notebook' ([www.katherinebrownwriting.wordpress.com](http://www.katherinebrownwriting.wordpress.com)) includes my blog series, 'The Key to a Great Story', where I explain how I go about building a story from scratch. It also includes 'Young Writer's Reviews' where I write reviews about books, films and TV series I have read or watched.**

## **Inspiration for DATA Predicts**

**After reading Home Deus by Yuval Noah Harari, I was inspired to write about how healthcare might look if AI used Big Data in order to 'predict' human health, and what the consequences of that might be for the humans involved.**

**Writing the future**

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