There are many books which tell the stories of doctors, surgeons, nurses, paramedics, but none that report the work of dietitians – an increasingly important medical role in modern society.

_Cold Tea and Tears_ is Mary Farmer’s biography of her life and work as a dietitian. The result is a candid and highly personal account of her 30-year career.

‘Dietitians are too often associated with weight loss advice – but in reality they do a lot more than this and work in many different fields,” says Mary. “This book is not just about slimming. It is much more about the valuable work that dietitians do in care homes, hospices, hospitals, the community and in education too.”

Mary invites us to be a fly on the wall in her out-patient clinics and on home visits; trips to residential care homes for the elderly and to the hospice where embarrassing ailments, ethical dilemmas, controversial and contentious matters are aired.

_Cold Tea and Tears_ will draw you into debates on mental illness, malnutrition in older patients and artificial (tube) feeding. Mary also looks at the fascinating topic of nutrition over the years, and the changing nutritional messages we are given over time.

This behind-the-scenes account offers eye-opening insight into the work of dietitians who, unlike doctors, paramedics and nurses, are not usually considered to be at the forefront of medical care.

This is a gentle, funny and beautifully written account of a career working at the coal-face of the NHS. Mary Farmer writes with wit, perspicacity and élan about her life and work. But not only does it offer a thoughtful retrospective on a career, with it’s many twists and turns and colourful characters, but also weaves into this political, cultural and social history to make it an informative, compelling and at times a devastating analysis of our relationship with food.

_Max Pemberton, _Daily Telegraph_

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