Tragical — comical — historical — pastoral*:
acting out aspects of rural practice

**Martin London**, National Centre for Rural Health, Christchurch, New Zealand

* *Hamlet: Act II, Scene II*

This workshop uses the improvisation skills of professional actors (and of a few non-professional would-be actors plus optional group participation!) to follow the fortunes of a rural practitioner and family in negotiating behavioural boundaries in small communities. It was developed as part of the rural sociology paper of a rural health diploma course but is far too much fun to restrict to that group.

It is “tragical” in that it could all go horribly wrong, “comical” in that improvisations so often are, “historical” in that, whatever original twists eventuate, it’s all happened before and “pastoral” in that … well, this is a rural conference!

Like much drama, it is intended to take a light-hearted view of serious issues — in this case the business of a health professional living and working in the same small community.

Come along to help with the arguments, watch the results of your decisions, join in the action or just see whom you recognise!

**PRESENTER**

**Martin London** trained in Bristol, emigrating to New Zealand in 1981. From 1983 he worked in rural practice at Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula, the first 8 years as sole practitioner, developing it for the teaching of undergraduates and GP trainees. In 1992 he convened the NZ Rural GP Network. He relocated in 1994 to suburban practice in Christchurch also setting up the Centre for Rural Health with rural nurse Jean Ross providing continuing professional development, locums and personal support for South Island rural practices. Within the Department of Public Health and General Practice it provided the context for creating a rural health diploma.

In 2001, as a member of the Rural Health Directors of Aotearoa, he worked with the Ministry of Health to develop a rural health action plan for New Zealand and now runs a rural health consultancy. (In spite of all this, he is still married to Karol, has two gorgeous growing up boys and gets out for the occasional climb.)