

DOCTOR ON THE ROAD: MG4



The first affordable electric car?

Disruptors. They influence all aspects of our lives and they challenge the current perceived normal in whatever arena they appear. Our motoring correspondent **Dr Tony Rimmer** (right) gives a big welcome to a new market shaker from MG



MEDICAL PRACTICE and health-care systems have had many disruptors during the last century, from new technology to new drugs. I can guarantee that the way you run your private practice now is subtly different to how it ran a decade or two ago, both clinically and organisationally. There have been many disruptors in the history of the automobile, such as Henry Ford introducing mass production and, more recently, Elon Musk introducing the world to electric vehicles (EVs). As the whole EV market has emerged and moved forward, there have been constant developments and innovations to increase efficiency and drive down costs. Electric cars have always been expensive when compared to comparable internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, but we are

now reaching a point where the average buyer might well be able to consider an EV without excessive extra outlay. This change has been facilitated by a new wave of manufacturers entering the market – all of them with the might of Chinese industry behind them. **Iconic brand** MG is an iconic British brand that we all recognise and it has been revitalised by its Chinese owners, the Shanghai Automotive Industry Organisation (SAIC), who bought the company in 2007. MG's first offerings of electric powered cars, such as the ZS EV, have been built on altered ICE chassis and although they are impressive and represent good value, they are compromised when compared to EVs built on dedi-

cated EV platforms – such as Volkswagen's ID series. However, things are now set to change. The MG4 is the brand's first ground-up-design electric car and it has shaken the market because it is one of the cheapest EVs you can buy. So, is it a true disruptor? Is this the vehicle we medics have been waiting for that is practical enough and priced sensibly enough to get us involved with all-electric movement? The new MG4 is a VW ID3-sized hatchback that has been devised and developed in MG's UK-based design centre. It is available with two battery sizes, 51kWh and 64 kWh, and two trim levels, SE and Trophy. Prices start at an impressive £26,995 and peak at £32,495.



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These are even more remarkable since the level of standard equipment, even in the SE model, is very generous. **Smart looks** I have been driving a 201bhp Trophy model, only available with the 64kWh battery, that offers a claimed range of up to 270 miles. So, the first thing to say is that the MG4 looks smart and modern from most angles. Light bodywork colours make the most of the contrasting black trim and sharp panel creases and I think the car

looks best in white – not normally a favourite colour of mine. Climb behind the wheel and you are greeted by a lovely leather steering wheel, leather-trimmed seats and an interior that feels classier than the ID3 – an unexpected surprise. There are two dashboard infotainment screens and both ApplePlay and AndroidAuto compatibility feature as standard. All the optional driving and safety features are easily accessible through the intuitive screen menu and steering-wheel buttons.

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A 360° camera facility in the Trophy model is a boon for easy parking. Passenger space is generous for what is externally a Golf-sized car and MG has made this a really family-friendly vehicle with lots of useful storage spaces and a large 363litre boot. Also, the charging cables can be slipped out of the way under the boot floor.

Smooth ride With 201bhp, rear-wheel drive and instant EV performance, urban driving is a real joy and the regenerative braking can be set for maximal retardation and efficiency that allows for almost one pedal driving.

Things remain impressive on the open road. Sharp steering and great body control give the MG a real sporty feel that is satisfyingly true to the marque. The icing on the cake is that the ride is smooth, comfortable and controlled – not firm and harsh like most hot hatchbacks. Road and wind noise are nicely suppressed too, so motorway travel is relaxed and the excellent sound system can be enjoyed at speed. I really enjoyed my time with the MG4. It is well made and comes with a comprehensive standard specification. It has decent useable range – a real-world 200-210 miles – and is satisfyingly fun to drive; not something that can be said for most EVs. While it is not perfect – there is no rear wiper and there are no interior grab handles – at £5,000 cheaper than the worthy but anodyne VW ID3, it represents an excellent package. ■

Dr Tony Rimmer is a former NHS GP practising in Guildford, Surrey

MG4 64kWh TROPHY LONG RANGE

- Body: Five-seat hatchback
- Engine: Single electric motor. Rear-wheel drive
- Power: 201bhp
- Torque: 250Nm
- Top speed: 100mph
- Acceleration: 0-62mph in 7.5 seconds
- Claimed range (WLTP): 270 miles
- CO₂ emissions: 0g/km
- On-the-road price: £32,495