



## Occupational Medicine What is it?

### **Occupational Medicine works to identify, isolate and eliminate preventable injury and illness caused or aggravated by work**

In 2012 / 2013

- 148 workers were killed at work
- 78 000 other injuries to employees were reported
- 175 000 over-7-day absence injuries occurred

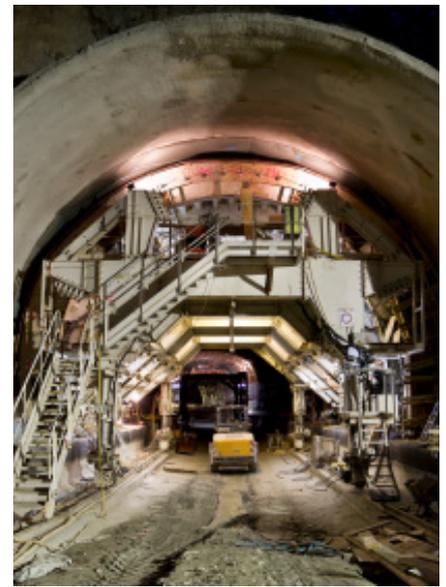
In 2011/2012

- 1.1 million working people were suffering from a work-related illness
- 27 million working days were lost due to work-related illness and workplace injury

In 2010/2011

- Workplace injuries and ill health (excluding cancer) cost society an estimated £13.8 billion\*\*

Occupational Medicine addresses these issues on a daily basis. We want to show you Occupational Medicine as an exciting career – its variety, complexity and importance.



Occupational medicine deals with the two way interaction between health and work. Occupational physicians frequently work with patients who have illness or injury, to facilitate their return to effective work. They have the opportunity to improve the health of employees individually or as a group, by introducing health improvement measures and by identifying hazards and risks in the work place. They work with managers to remove them completely, or to improve the workplace control of such hazards.

Workplaces present an extremely wide range of hazards which can cause ill health in workers: noise, chemical exposures, radiation, viruses, bacteria, biological allergens, skin sensitizers, psychological issues, heavy machinery, hostile environments and more, any of which, if uncontrolled, present very real risks to workers. Occupational physicians have to understand the nature of the hazards and be able to give advice to managers on the best ways to reduce exposure to them.

Occupational physicians have a broad range of responsibilities.

Occupational physicians need knowledge of health aspects within employment law so that their advice ensures that employers comply with their legal duties.

Occupational physicians work in multidisciplinary teams, often in a leadership capacity. The team is likely



to include occupational health nurses, occupational hygienists, physiotherapists and other professionals who all work together with representatives from the employer and employees to improve the health of workers.

To be an effective occupational physician, you need to have a good working and wide knowledge of clinical medicine and you need sound knowledge of the processes involved in work activities.

As an occupational physician, you will have the opportunity to make business and industries safer and more effective. Using your knowledge of work and health, your clinical and your influencing skills, you can help ensure that hazards are better controlled and that preventable injuries and illnesses caused by work are eliminated.

### ENTRY TO SPECIALTY TRAINING

You need to have;

- Good knowledge of clinical medicine
- Good team working skills and the ability to lead when required as a clinical expert
- Good communication skills with individuals and with groups such as trade unions, employers, regulators, councils and uniformed services
- Enthusiasm for improving processes to prevent work related illness, and to improve workers health

Entry to formal occupational medicine training is normally at ST3 level. For entry requirements please view the **Person Specification**.

### CAREERS

Occupational medicine offers a career with the potential for international work at a senior level in unusual and challenging environments. Consultant positions are available within the NHS, and in private organisations. Specialists can move

between jobs and sectors. There are opportunities to become a Chief Medical Adviser to national or multi-national companies, to run your own business or to work abroad or in the UK, in aviation, call centres, building sites, oil rigs, nuclear power plants, universities, retail shops, warehousing, tunnelling, the armed forces and manufacturing to name but a few potential opportunities.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more or in seeking funding for a student elective, please contact the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

**www.fom.ac.uk** See the section for medical students under Education and Training.

If you want to find out more about occupational medicine, please contact the **Training Manager**. We can put you in contact with a local occupational physician who can talk to you about the many and varied activities undertaken by the specialists.

Occupational medicine is a fascinating career and has enormous opportunities. It may very well be the career to suit you.

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