



Life as an occupational physician

One of a series of profiles of doctors working in occupational medicine

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Life as a trainee in occupational health is very varied, and depends in part on the organisation that you work for – for example, in industry or in the NHS.

As a specialist/specialty registrar in an industry post, my clinics are attended by employees from a number of different companies. Typical tasks might be:

- A fitness-to-work assessment for a safety-critical role such as a telecommunications pole climber or a member of the police or fire brigade
- A routine medical assessment for a worker in confined spaces (e.g. in underground tunnels)
- An assessment of mental health in an office-based employee or an employee in a safety critical role
- An assessment of the fitness of a journalist to undertake an overseas posting

My additional role as the representative of specialist/specialty registrars in the Faculty of Occupational Medicine has provided me with an opportunity to participate in Faculty meetings, and to gain a wider understanding of matters such as policy and guideline development. As part of this role, I also attend the Academy Trainee Doctors' Group meetings which enable me to work with trainees from a wide range of specialties and to consider topical and political issues of relevance to UK trainees.

There are regular evening meetings at the Society of Occupational Medicine and the Royal Society of Medicine which are an excellent opportunity to keep updated and to meet with other colleagues.

Regular tutorials and contact with your trainer are also an important part of training, and can involve developing other skills including audit or policy development, as well as sharing clinical experiences and getting support and advice.

Overall, our specialty covers a wide range of areas, and there is plenty of scope to develop special skills and interests, both as you progress through training and subsequently.

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