



Clinical Radiology

The Royal College of Radiologists

Why I chose a career in clinical radiology

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If you had asked me what I wanted to do as a medical student, or even as a foundation doctor, I don't think radiology would have been on my radar. In many ways for me it was a process of elimination. I thought about surgery and O&G, but it just wasn't me. I considered medicine, but hours of ward rounds and dealing with prolonged social admissions wasn't for me. I was never going to be a GP and although I enjoyed A&E, a lifetime of the lifestyle didn't appeal.

I even jumped off the NHS treadmill to head to New Zealand and after about 6 months there I had an epiphany.... I came into medicine because I loved problem solving and found making the diagnosis one of the most rewarding aspects of the job. I loved anatomy and pathology at medical school. I also loved the opportunity to perform interventions that could rapidly improve a patient's quality of life or chance of accurate diagnosis. I realised that the specialty that was increasingly central to all this was clinical radiology.

As a result, I began to spend more time in my local department, and did a couple of projects with them. I attended some courses and completed a week of shadowing in an NHS department. By the end of that I was sold. I applied and started my programme in September 2012. Radiology offers so many opportunities for problem solving and I don't think I've ever found anything so challenging or so rewarding. Plus, I've never had to use and update my medical knowledge so much. There are lots of special interest areas but also the opportunity to be a generalist. I'm sure most doctors could find something that really motivates them and I think this is why it attracts such a wide range of interesting and inspiring people.

Also, don't listen to the suggestion that radiology is for doctors who don't like talking to people! You'll constantly be discussing, giving advice to and seeking advice from just about every specialty in the hospital. You'll regularly be interacting with radiographers, ultrasonographers and support staff. In ultrasound or intervention you have to quickly form a relationship of trust with a patient to ensure the procedure goes well for both of you. Excellent communication skills are crucial for providing the best care for the patients involved.

Radiology offers great training with good provision for flexible training. Prior to my first exams, I had 2 days of teaching a week. Plus every report I complete is an opportunity for consultant led teaching. I don't know any other specialty that takes training its trainees so seriously and there are lots of teaching and research opportunities too.



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So whether you're a medical student, a confused foundation doctor or a disillusioned SHO or registrar, I'd definitely recommend considering radiology as a career. No one in the NHS really gets to see any daylight during working hours, but no one has a job as interesting as the radiologists!