

**PSYCHIATRY IS ONE OF THE MOST VARIED, INTERESTING AND REWARDING
SPECIALTIES IN MEDICINE. EVERY DAY CAN BE DIFFERENT
AND EVERY PATIENT SEEN IS UNIQUE.**

Duties of a psychiatric trainee

The workload and duties vary widely between jobs. The trainees are usually responsible for the day-to-day management of in-patients and community patients always under supervision. Each trainee gets an hour of protected time per week for consultant supervision where they discuss issues pertaining to their professional development. They also get an opportunity to attend teaching at the local MRCPsych course. On-call duties are usually less hectic than in the acute specialties and many rotas allow you to be on call from home. Some hospitals have teams of nurses trained to deal with self-harm assessments and patients who present in crisis. They help to reduce the workload for the trainees and make the job more pleasant.

Career progression

Psychiatry offers fast career progression and excellent job opportunities. Psychiatry is one of the medical specialties with the highest number of flexible trainees. Flexible training in psychiatry allows you to combine a fascinating and rewarding career with other commitments or interests. It provides a fantastic opportunity to take on leadership roles in the NHS and the ability to influence the wider NHS.

Psychiatrists incorporate:

- Knowledge- *medical, psychiatric, and social sciences*
- Skills- *in assessment, pharmacological and psychotherapeutic treatments*
- Professional attributes – *managerial, ethical, communication, collaboration*

Specialties in psychiatry

General adult psychiatry

Looks after people aged 16 - 65 with a wide variety of mental health needs and illnesses including depression, mania, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and people with personality disorders. It provides exciting opportunities to work in an assortment of settings including community bases, district general hospitals, university hospitals or a combination of these.

Old age psychiatry

Continuously evolving specialty focused on mental health needs of those over the age of 65. A major part of the job involves pharmacological, psychological and social aspects of dealing with patients with cognitive impairment (mainly dementia but also delirium). It provides an almost unique interface with geriatric medicine and the opportunity to apply both your medical and your psychiatric training in the care of the elderly.

Child and adolescent psychiatry

This is concerned with the intellectual, emotional and behavioural problems of children from birth to school-leaving age. It provides an interesting prospect of developing a close working relationship with the child concerned and their family.

Forensic psychiatry

Involves interaction between psychiatry and the law, and cares for and treats offenders with mental health problems.

Psychiatry of learning disability

This deals with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the mental health problems which often occur in people with learning disability. It also helps to gain an understanding in related subjects such as paediatrics, neurology, epilepsy, genetics, biochemistry and psychology.

Psychotherapy

Required to assess and treat people with, for example, psychoneuroses, personality and behavioural disorders, and sexual and interpersonal problems. It provides expertise in the application of psychotherapeutic principles, including the psychodynamic use of the doctor-patient relationship as part of the general management of all patients with mental health and psychosomatic disorders.

Social and rehabilitation psychiatry

This is concerned with promoting the recovery of people with long-term serious and complex mental health problems. It provides an extremely gratifying role of ensuring the mental and social wellbeing of patients with severe and enduring mental illnesses.

Addiction psychiatry

This involves treating adults and young people with a range of drug, alcohol and other addictions. Many of them also have other mental illnesses. You may acquire skills in prescribing for maintenance and treatment of withdrawal states, managing physical illness and mental illness in addiction patients and in providing psychological treatment.

Academic psychiatry

This concerns the exploration, through research, of the basis for all mental illness, its clinical manifestation and treatment. It involves the need to develop research ideas, protocols for their study through testing hypotheses, analysing and presenting results at conferences and writing scientific papers. The clinical academic will spend a lifetime engaged in developing new ideas, contributing to the existing knowledge base upon which evidence-based practice depends, as well as practising clinical psychiatry within their chosen specialty.

Ref

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/specialtytraining/careersinpsychiatry/careersinfoforugs.aspx>

I'm interested- What do I do now?

- **Join the Manchester Psychiatric Society-** it's free to join and no membership fee. It aims to support students interested in psychiatry and raise profile of mental health issues email: sam.abbot@manchesterpsychiatry.net
- **Become a student associate** of the Royal College of Psychiatrists- it's free! It entitles you to a free annual conference specifically designed for undergraduates; free e-subscription to Psychiatric Bulletin and British Journal of Psychiatry (worth hundreds of pounds); free e-newsletter; 10% discount on college publications www.rcpsych.ac.uk/medicalstudents
- **Go to Psychiatry at the Movies-** learn about mental health issues through film with Dr. Ross Overshott. Email Diana.Muramaa@mhsc.nhs.uk for further details
- **Enter the Neel Halder Prize in Psychiatry-** an essay competition with the chance of winning money; all receive certificates and detailed feedback; other benefits (See Jan issue page 23) email editor@mediscoponline.com
- **Read Neel Halder's article on "Why is Psychiatry a great career choice?"** Jan 2010 Pages 22-23
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