

"I have always been drawn to surgery as a 'craft' specialty and the creative aspects of surgery."

Francesca was interested in medicine from a young age and at school she always preferred the sciences and maths subjects to humanities.

Francesca Kum

Trainee in core surgical training (CST) wishing to specialise in ENT or Urology

Employer or university

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust



How I got into the role

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I graduated from King's College London Medical School in 2012 and my two years of foundation training ^[1] provided an all-round experience in breast/general surgery, cardiology, acute medicine, ear nose and throat (ENT) Surgery, urology and emergency medicine. I have chosen to train in surgery and would like to specialise in either ENT or urology.

What I do

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Working in a surgical specialty, days usually start at 8am, or even earlier! Depending on the rota, on an ENT rotation a core surgical trainee is assigned to one of three jobs: being on call ^[2], or working in an outpatient clinic or theatre. The on call ^[2] shift generally runs from 8am to 8.30pm and I see patients referred from A&E, other specialties and GPs, as well as patients on the wards.

On clinic days I join the ward round at 8am and go to clinic for 9am, finishing around 5pm. Theatre days are busy too, starting with seeing all the patients before their surgery to make sure they're consented properly and have had their queries answered. Guy's Hospital is a tertiary head and neck cancer centre so we see patients for very complex procedures, as well as routine cases. Complex operations are often performed by surgeons from a number of different specialties and can take all day, meaning we can sometimes finish operations at about 8pm.

The best bits and challenges

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I have always been drawn to surgery as a 'craft' specialty and the creative aspects of surgery allow me to see the outcomes of my 'handiwork', even something as simple as closing an incision. ENT is an extremely varied specialty and my role has given me the opportunity to work on the ward, see patients independently in clinic and attend theatre lists.

Career plans and top tips for others

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What would I say to anyone considering a career in medicine? It's a very long road ahead, but ask questions, be curious and enjoy the journey!

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training [2]
https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On_call