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Real-life story - Jack Pearson

Jack's mother is a scientist so he thinks that's where he got his interest in biology from.

Real-life story - Jack Pearson

Trainee clinical scientist (embryology)

Employer or university

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Salary range

£25k-£35k



I'm currently on rotation around multiple hospital departments including genetics, histology and cytology.

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**How I got into
the role**

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During my degree I knew that reproductive science was my passion. There's nothing more remarkable than the thought of a single sperm fertilising an egg and the tiny chance of it producing us as unique individuals!

After university I did some volunteer work and research with Professor Allan Pacey, a senior lecturer in andrology [the study of male reproductive problems] but I decided a career with patient contact would suit me better so I applied for the NHS Science Training [Master's] Programme.

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What I do

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I've always wanted to help people in my work and fertility is a particularly sensitive and compassionate field.

I'm currently on rotation around multiple hospital departments including [genetics](#) ^[1], histology and cytology to see how other departments work.

But in my embryology role I perform fertilisation checks and contact the patients to let them know how their embryos are progressing. I perform egg collections from women who've been on hormone treatment and prepare sperm samples from men, as well as assisted reproductive techniques such as IVF and ICSI, and embryo transfers for couples whose embryos are ready to be implanted.

People often think we grow babies in test tubes the lab, but there are no test tubes involved!

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The best bits and challenges

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Communicating with patients is my favourite aspect of the job and I love that I get to use my scientific skills and knowledge to provide the best quality care for them.

I've yet to do it myself, but I know that breaking bad news – when treatment has been unsuccessful - will be the most challenging thing.

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Life outside work

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collapse**

I'm a keen runner and gym member and both are essential for me to unwind and make me feel happy and alert. I'm the chair of the Yorkshire and Humber Healthcare Scientist Trainee Network and help organise events for trainees in the region and make the most of the weekends, visiting friends all over the country.

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Career plans and top tips for others

**Expand /
collapse**

Once I've completed the Master's programme, I'll be interested to explore the Higher Scientific Specialist Training in future. It takes five years and enables progression to consultant clinical scientist. I'd also like a spell working abroad once I have enough experience.

If you think a career in reproductive science is for you, be bold and prepared to gain a lot of experience beforehand. Before I started, I volunteered as a community first responder for Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust and visited fertility clinics around the UK to see how the lab functioned.

I'd recommend gaining different work experience you can then use to sell yourself, and make sure you network with different people too.

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Genetics>