Real-life story - Richard Fernandez

In his role as a clinical scientist, Richard combines his scientific expertise with excellent people skills. He faces new challenges every day, and it's this variety and diversity that makes the role so appealing.

Richard Fernandez

Clinical scientist, Department of Medical Physics

Employer or university
Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, London
healthcare-science-male-with-gamma-camera

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What I do

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There isn't a typical day in my job. One day I might be testing a gamma camera, making sure it's functioning properly for patient imaging. The next day I might be giving a patient radioactive treatment for thyroid cancer. Often they will be worried about their treatment and how it will affect them, and I'll have to allay their concerns. On other occasions, in my role as a radiation protection supervisor, I'll be advising staff on safety measures and best practice when dealing with radiation.

My perspective

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The challenges of the job are what I really enjoy. It’s the diversity. The common perception of a physicist far removed from people didn’t appeal to me. I love the variety and interaction with clinical staff and the general public. I also enjoy teaching students on postgraduate nuclear medicine courses. What is also challenging is that nuclear medicine is one of the most regulated disciplines. It’s vital to make sure we always meet the relevant regulations.

Advice and tips

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I think that if you want to do this job, you need to have a clear idea about what’s involved in nuclear medicine. You obviously need an excellent grounding in physics and to be able to apply this theory. It’s also essential to have good people skills – I often have to explain complex nuclear physics in easily understandable language. The key skills to this job really are in the title: clinical scientist. You have to balance working as a scientist with the requirements of a clinical setting.
