

Transcript of Interview with Dr. Meng Aw-Yong,
Associate Specialist in Emergency Medicine – Hillingdon Hospital

Emergency medicine is one of those Specialities that gives you a huge range of clinical skills; you deal with minor and major incidents. For example, last week a lady came in who had an abdominal pain. We used the ultrasound machine and found that she had an aortic aneurism. She didn't want treatment and my colleague, my registrar, decided to talk to her. He found she was depressed and after lots of talks to her and her family she actually agreed to have treatment... So there's a lady at 91 who could be dead, but was helped through, not just clinical skills, but emphatic skills as well. Emergency medicine allows you to do this and we actually changed her life around; that was a really good example for us.

HOW CHALLENGING IS THE WORK?

A few years back there was an M4 bus crash. The passengers were brought here and I often use that as an example. The occupants were Polish; none of us could speak Polish. There was a mother and children with limbs torn off and it was heartrending. The floors were covered in blood, our cleaners couldn't mop fast enough and it was a fantastic example of team work with nurses, radiographers and doctors all mucking in together. That's the beauty of emergency medicine. It's about team work, leadership skills - about sharing responsibility.

HOW DO I TELL IF IT IS FOR ME?

I think it's important to try it and do four months in a post, because it might suit you; but you not going to know unless you try for yourself.

WHAT ABOUT PAY AND CONDITIONS?

The pay is the same as for all the other medical doctor's jobs. You would start as FY2 on 30K or thereabouts and as a consultant on 70K or thereabouts. The work is a service delivery job and our doors are open 24/7 so it's constant work.

ARE THERE JOBS?

It's fantastic at the moment. It's a buyers' market because it's expanding. A & E is being used 24/7. We've had over 1 million patients seen – a 30% increase year on year - so we need doctors. We want doctors who are dedicated, who are enthusiastic, and who want to be a jack of all trades.

DID YOU MAKE THE RIGHT CAREER CHOICE?

I actually changed from orthopaedic to emergency medicine and that change has been the right thing.