

Dr. James Murphy
First Year Paediatrics Specialist Training at Wexham Park Hospital

Subject: CAREER FOUNDATION

WE ARE HERE AT WEXHAM PARK HOSPITAL TO TALK TO DR. JAMES MURPHY. DR. MURPHY. JAMES, YOU'VE FINISHED FOUNDATION, WHAT STAGE ARE YOU NOW AT IN YOUR TRAINING AS A DOCTOR?

I've just come through the foundation programme and I'm now in my first year of specialist training in paediatrics in the Oxford Deanery. I studied medicine on a four year course at Warwick University and before that I did a degree at Leeds in Pharmacology.

AT WHAT STAGE DID YOU CHOOSE PAEDIATRICS AS YOUR SPECIALITY?

It was a dead heat between that and general practice and core medical training right up until the applications. I put applications in for all of them, but the interviews came for paediatrics first and I had actually secured jobs before any of the other interviews came about. However, when I weighed up my experience I decided paediatrics was probably for the best.

WAS FOUNDATION A GOOD EXPERIENCE? WHAT WERE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT IT?

Foundation training is amazing. I had a great time. Probably one of the best things was about a month into the job, after I had successfully cannulated a few people, I didn't feel like a fraud when I introduced myself as a doctor to my patients. Other than that I did my F1 at University College Hospital and looked after a few famous people, which was quite interesting; and my surgical consultant took a few of us to his Gentleman's Club in Pall Mall as a thank you at the end of the year and that was certainly a highlight

I THINK YOU DID SOMETHING FOR THE UK FPO AS WELL

(The UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) responsible for operation and development of foundation programme across the UK.)

That's right. I was lucky to be selected as the national doctor advisor. So I set up a committee with representatives from every foundation school and hopefully we did help in the creation of the new foundation curriculum and things like that.

SOME GOOD TIMES; BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WORST EXPERIENCES?

Thankfully not too many; but I would say that dealing with the death of a patient is always difficult for any doctor and certainly when you have just qualified. In my experience though there were lots of people on hand to talk to, and there was some formal debriefing sessions as well and these were really useful. I'd say that you should avoid keeping those emotions inside, but discuss them with other people.

WITH THE BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, IF YOU WERE TO DO IT ALL AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY NOW?

One of the things would be to do a taster in general practice, you see I'd had direct experience through my rotations in paediatrics and in medicine, but I didn't get a GP rotation. I've heard from other people that have done them they are really good way of getting an insight into that speciality. It would have been nice to have that fully rounded picture when it came to applications.

WHAT TIPS HAVE YOU GOT FOR PEOPLE JUST ENTERING FOUNDATION?

It's difficult. You need to think about your career really early. Even though you are dealing with the transition from medical student to junior doctor you need to be thinking about what you want to do and how you are going to make yourself competitive when it comes to interviews. Teaching is a really great way of separating yourself out from the competition. I've got a friend who set up a national teaching programme, which was really useful for his application. Another person set up a teaching revision course for final year students; and I think audit is also a great way. As an F1 I managed to get involved in an audit with some senior colleagues in obstetrics, which ended up being presented at an international conference. I learned a lot about the speciality and that certainly helped my CV as well.

Suggestions:

- Undertake a GP Taster. 50% of careers for doctors will be in general practice.
- Teaching. Setting up a programme. Think about differentiating yourself.
- Think about your career early. This website has several career planning tools to help you.
- Get involved with audits and presentations – more details on our website about doing this.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T GET INTO A ROTATION, I THINK YOU'VE GOT TO SEEK PEOPLE OUT AND TALK TO THEM?

Absolutely, I've never heard of anyone being turned away from a consultant's door. If a junior colleague takes an interest in their speciality they are usually more than happy to talk about things, maybe even offer you the opportunity to spend a day on the wards with them.

YOU TALK ABOUT PRESENTATION; WHAT ABOUT THE PORTFOLIO?

The portfolio becomes even more important now that some specialities are requesting that you bring that along to the interviews for specialist training. You really need to give that your full attention. It will help you to structure your learning through the foundation programme and will help through the CBDs (case based discussion) CEX (clinical evaluation exercise) and DOPs (direct observation of procedural skills) to point out to you which issues you need to improve on.

Suggestion: Give the portfolio your full attention. It may be seen during interviews.
DR MURPHY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND BEST OF LUCK IN THE REST OF YOUR CAREER

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

- Think career early
- Seek out leadership and management opportunities
- Use every opportunity to enhance your employability
- Get involved in audits publications presentations and teaching
- Talk to consultants and look for taster experiences
- Build your portfolio and use it fully