

Newly arrived in UK? By Parinitha



Career in the United Kingdom for an overseas doctor begins with the PLAB exam, the new atmosphere, a different working System and also a period of Observership before the actual Job. And thereupon, it is working towards further career enhancement in their fields of Interest. Hence it is important to nurture the career at an early stage.

Those are the daring ones who have ventured to make their career in a new place, far away from home. Our ancestors have rightly said that food, shelter and air are the basic necessities of life. One realises this fact only on coming out of the protected shell. Not many find it difficult to get accustomed to this new place, if they have lived in the metropolitan/cosmopolitan cities. Since there is a good inflow of overseas doctors, one is no more finding it difficult to venture alone and follow the crowd. Yes, we all make some new friends. Fortunately, I must say that people in the U.K. are very warm and quite helpful.

Most people would have brought along with them a few D's- Determination, Dedication, Devotion, and Discipline. At the same time one needs to start possessing a few P's and C's as well- Positive attitude, Patience, Punctuality, Politeness, Courage, Constant enthusiasm and of course **Confidence**- in loads. Knowledge will always remain at the top and there is no

substitute to it. It is the key to medical practice. In what way is clinical practice in U.K. different than our home country? Is it completely different or is it just that things are better defined? The latter seems to be more appropriate. The approach to clinical practice is very patient oriented; be it patient confidentiality or data protection or even practice of evidence-based medicine. There is more emphasis to Clinical Governance, Multidisciplinary team approach, Communication skills and Continuous Professional Development of the staff. All these may sound very different initially and one may question the need; but this is what makes NHS to be one of the best health organisations of the world.

Post PLAB is the most challenging time for most doctors although; unable to pass the PLAB exam would be the most distressing one. Clinical attachment is the first break after the PLAB examination. For some it may just take a couple of weeks and for others it may take more than a year to get their first Job. The financial and emotional stresses are already rising high at this stage. It is very important to try and not lose hope. It is no less difficult to get a Clinical attachment than to get a Job. Some hospitals charge for a clinical attachment, which I think, is very unfair. There may be no guarantee to get the first job in the same trust. However clinical attachment is the opportunity that must be utilised to understand the working of British health system. Unfortunately, there have been concerns expressed by many consultants about the interest that the new doctors show. It is very important to ensure that you actively participate in ward rounds, out patient clinics and post graduate meetings. Constantly updating the Curriculum Vitae, doing an Audit, improving communication skills, making use of the library facilities, attending courses, which don't even cost a penny, are all other important jobs during clinical attachment. And yes, this is the best time to prepare for membership exams, if possible. But of course, it is easier said than done. Friends and Well-wishers can play a major role and it is always worth talking to them about their experiences. The days are shorter and darkness

is long during this phase, like the English Winter until the Bright SUN of a JOB shines.

I have learnt some lessons from my experiences, which I hope will benefit others. It was a process of learning throughout. Getting into the System as a Clinical Observer was not a cakewalk for me either. It took me 2 months of applying to get one after I landed in this country. Meanwhile I was taking my PLAB exam, which kept me occupied. It was after the first clinical attachment that I realised the magnitude of the difficulties of getting a job. There seemed to be no ray of hope to get a job in the place where I was i.e. in a University hospital. I was given different opinions but I had myself seen a couple getting jobs at the same hospital as well. Soon my term was over. I was due to start another attachment in another place. This place did not look promising. It was my family and friends who guided me at this stage to move back to the same place and in a week's time Meanwhile, I managed to get a PRHO job, but it was due to start after 8 months since I had applied for the next term. I constantly kept trying to restart another clinical attachment in the same trust. Everyday was challenging and demanding without a job. Finally, one of the Consultants obliged and took me under his supervision when he saw that I was trying hard. I must say at this point that a word of appreciation came from him. He said, "so, you are still perseverant?" Once I started, I would not miss a day and I would constantly observe and learn new things everyday. I thoroughly enjoyed my Clinical Observer ship. While I was observing the system, the Consultants were probably observing me! I realised this only after I was offered a job in the same trust and in the same unit (PICU). Only some consultants may have powers to recommend a person for the Job. But I personally feel that despite their busy schedule, Consultants are kind enough to introduce young doctors to the system and guide them. Their references are very precious to get a job. For most, it is the job applications, which plays a major role in getting them short-listed. A well-written CV is vital.

At the end of the day it is one's keen interest and hard work, which will help, reach the goal sooner. It will be recognised somewhere, someday.

Good Luck
- By Parinitha.