



# Alternative career options for Medics

This publication lists brief details of a range of careers related to Medicine with some relevant links for further information. Note: while some of these careers *require* a medical degree and clinical experience prior to entry (i.e. only suitable for *qualified doctors*), others are options for medical students who are considering alternative careers that have a relationship to medicine.

Part of the information is based on content from NHS Medical Careers:

[www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/tools\\_and\\_resources/alternative\\_careers\\_options.aspx](http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/tools_and_resources/alternative_careers_options.aspx)

and King's College London Careers Service (part of The Careers Group, University of London):

<http://beyondclinical.thecareersgroup.co.uk/professional-profiles/>

## **Academic Medicine**

Academic medicine describes roles for scientifically trained clinicians who work in both patient care and research. Those working in academic medicine are usually called clinical academics. Some clinical academics also teach or lecture: [www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career\\_options/academic\\_medicine.aspx](http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career_options/academic_medicine.aspx)

## **Armed Forces Medicine**

Doctors in the Army are also officers and provide medical care for soldiers and their families. See 'Defence medical careers' via [www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career\\_options/alternatives\\_to\\_working\\_in\\_nhs.aspx](http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career_options/alternatives_to_working_in_nhs.aspx)

## **Aviation Medicine (also Aerospace Medicine)**

Assessing the fitness to fly of pilots, cabin crew and infirm (a subspecialty of occupational medicine):

<http://aerosociety.com/About-Us/specgroups/Aerospace-Medicine>; [www.aame.co.uk](http://www.aame.co.uk)

## **Benefits Work**

Doctors employed by Atos Healthcare carry out Work Capability Assessments for the Department for Work and Pensions to determine a client's entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance:

[www.atoshealthcare.com/claimants/our\\_healthcare\\_professionals](http://www.atoshealthcare.com/claimants/our_healthcare_professionals)

## **Charity Administration**

Administration involves a variety of tasks; usually the larger the organisation the more specialised the role:

[www.prospects.ac.uk/charities\\_voluntary\\_sector\\_overview.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/charities_voluntary_sector_overview.htm). In particular, you could choose to work for a medical related organisation such as a medical research charity: [www.amrc.org.uk](http://www.amrc.org.uk)

## **Civil Service in the UK including The Fast Stream**

Becoming a Civil Servant could be as simple as applying for one of the many jobs advertised on the website:

[www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment](http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/recruitment) but they also offer separate entry routes for promising graduates and experienced professionals. There are many different departments, agencies and public bodies, including the Department of Health, Healthcare Commission, Health Protection Agency, Medical Research Council and more. For a full list see: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations). Entry-level jobs in the Civil Service occur at different levels but one major route of entry for graduates is the Civil Service Fast Stream: <http://faststream.civilservice.gov.uk>.

## **Clinical Forensic Medical Examiner (Police Surgeon)**

Clinical forensic medical examiners (or forensic physicians) spend much of their time examining people who have been arrested. Detainees either ask to see a doctor, or need to be examined to see if they are fit for interview or fit to be detained: [www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org) (see the 'Examinations' tab for details of the relevant Diploma );

[www.forensic-science-society.org.uk](http://www.forensic-science-society.org.uk); <http://fflm.ac.uk>

## **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an evidence-based psychological treatment for a variety of disorders including depression, anxiety, panic disorder, fatigue syndrome, OCD, bulimia nervosa and insomnia: [www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com);

[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx)

## **Complementary Medicine**

Complementary medicine is defined as treatments which are used alongside conventional medical treatments. The five main treatments in the UK are osteopathy, chiropractic, herbalism, homoeopathy, and acupuncture:

[www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs\\_health.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_health.htm) for relevant occupational profiles; [www.iscmmr.org](http://www.iscmmr.org)

## **Coroner**

An independent judicial officer responsible for inquiring into violent, sudden and unexpected, unnatural, or suspicious deaths. Coroners need to have a minimum number of years of judicial experience, so a legal career is the first step. Few coroners are doctors but some have qualifications in both medicine and law: [www.coronersociety.org.uk](http://www.coronersociety.org.uk)

### **Diving Medicine**

Qualified physicians whose work may involve diving research, training, performing "fitness to dive" medical examinations, or treating diving related injuries: [www.ddrc.org](http://www.ddrc.org)

### **Expedition Medicine**

Doctors who are expedition medical officers have duties which include risk assessment of the environment and activities, medical histories of participants, assembling medical kit, and advice on immunisations. During the trip they are responsible for managing those who become ill or injured and arranging evacuation in an emergency: [www.expeditionmedicine.co.uk](http://www.expeditionmedicine.co.uk); [www.wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk](http://www.wildernessmedicaltraining.co.uk)

### **Forensic Pathology**

Forensic pathology is open to medical graduates who have completed foundation training. It is the specialised branch of histopathology concerned with the investigation of deaths where there are medico-legal implications, for example, suspected homicides, death in custody and other complex medico-legal cases: [www.rcpath.org/careers/forensic-pathology](http://www.rcpath.org/careers/forensic-pathology); <http://fflm.ac.uk>

### **Health Economics**

Health economists study the functioning of the health care system. Their aim is to obtain maximum value for money by ensuring not just the clinical effectiveness, but also the cost-effectiveness of healthcare provision: [www.ohe.org](http://www.ohe.org)

### **Health Policy**

Health policy analysis is the process of assessing and choosing between spending and resource alternatives that affect the health care system and the health of the general public: [www.fph.org.uk/being\\_a\\_public\\_health\\_consultant](http://www.fph.org.uk/being_a_public_health_consultant)

### **Health Promotion**

Helps people to improve and increase control over their health. Plan, ensure implementation of, and evaluate policies and strategies to promote health within a specialist setting, relating to a specific issue, or within a particular population: [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk); [www.ihpe.org.uk/memb/institute.htm](http://www.ihpe.org.uk/memb/institute.htm); [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/a-to-z/#H](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/a-to-z/#H); [www.phorcast.org.uk](http://www.phorcast.org.uk)

### **Health Service Management**

Responsible for the provision and commissioning of local health care through the management of hospital, general practitioner (GP) and community health services. Managers liaise with all levels of medical staff, whilst considering the demands of political policy and local circumstances: [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/manage.shtml](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/manage.shtml)

### **Healthcare Scientist**

Many roles are lab-based although others are patient-facing roles. Work in one of four broad areas within the NHS, namely life sciences, physiological sciences, clinical engineering and medical physics, or bioinformatics: [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/healthcare-science/](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/healthcare-science/)

### **Insurance Medicals**

A number of the larger insurance companies employ doctors to carry out medicals. Some will provide training. For a list of insurance companies: [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

### **International Aid and Development**

Offers opportunities for clinical personnel as well as roles in other areas where a medical background could be useful, such as project planning and management: [www.prospects.ac.uk/international\\_aid\\_development\\_worker\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/international_aid_development_worker_job_description.htm); [www.wse.org.uk](http://www.wse.org.uk)

### **Management Consultancy**

Management consultants initiate and implement technological, organisational and behavioural changes in an organisation. Their work involves providing objective appraisals of business operations. Some work in healthcare consultancy: [www.prospects.ac.uk/management\\_consultant\\_job\\_description.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/management_consultant_job_description.htm)

### **Medical Devices Equipment Engineer**

The medical device industry covers the research, development, manufacture, regulation, marketing and selling of devices from a straightforward dressing to a complex surgical robot. Medical devices are an essential element of health care and play a role in diagnosing, preventing and treating disease, illness and medical conditions. The NHS recruits some Healthcare Scientists into Clinical Engineering & Medical Physics via the NHS Scientist Training Programme (see relevant section of [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)). The Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI) is the industry association for the UK medical devices sector: [www.abhi.org.uk/home.aspx](http://www.abhi.org.uk/home.aspx)

### **Medical Education**

Medical education is the provision of education related to becoming a doctor, either the initial training at medical school, or postgraduate training. Working as a lecturer in academia usually follows a PhD and postgraduate research experience (see also Medical Research below):

[www.prospects.ac.uk/higher\\_education\\_lecturer\\_entry\\_requirements.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/higher_education_lecturer_entry_requirements.htm); [www.asme.org.uk](http://www.asme.org.uk).

### **Medical Informatics**

Medical informatics deals with the resources, devices, and methods required to optimise the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information in health and biomedicine: [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/health-informatics](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/health-informatics); [www.ebi.ac.uk](http://www.ebi.ac.uk); [www.biomedcentral.com/bmcmmedinformdecismak](http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcmmedinformdecismak)

### **Medical Journalism/Writing**

Medical journalists write articles on medical matters for a variety of media including newspapers, magazines and professional journals, both in print and online, or work in broadcast media. A medical writer is anyone engaged in communication in the medical or allied professions and sciences. The purpose of medical writing is to create documents that effectively and clearly express the messages the data have to tell: [www.emwa.org/Mum/Career.pdf](http://www.emwa.org/Mum/Career.pdf)  
[www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/startingout/](http://www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/startingout/); [www.mjauk.org](http://www.mjauk.org); [www.absw.org.uk](http://www.absw.org.uk)

### **Medical Law**

Dual qualifications in medicine and law are sought-after, particularly for roles in medical defence organisations, or for risk managers for health trusts or for coroners. Law firms also look out for people specialising in medical law:

[www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk); [www.sodil.co.uk](http://www.sodil.co.uk) (Society of Doctors in Law)

### **Medical Illustration/Clinical Photography**

A medical illustrator is a professional artist who interprets and creates visual material to help record and disseminate medical, biological and related knowledge: [www.imi.org.uk](http://www.imi.org.uk). Medical photographers produce accurate and objective images that truthfully record injuries and diseases, as well as the progress of operations and medical procedures: [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/healthcare-science/careers-in-healthcare-science/careers-in-clinical-engineering-and-medical-physics/clinical-photography/](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/healthcare-science/careers-in-healthcare-science/careers-in-clinical-engineering-and-medical-physics/clinical-photography/); [www.imi.org.uk/document/careers-in-medical-illustration](http://www.imi.org.uk/document/careers-in-medical-illustration)

### **Medical Publishing**

There are a wide range of roles within publishing. These include editor, proofreader, graphic designer, planner, sales and marketing. Individuals may work on printed or digital information in the form of books, magazines, journals, newspapers, databases, directories and electronic media: [www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/aboutus.html](http://www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/aboutus.html)

### **Medical Research (see also Scientific Research and Development below)**

Medical researchers are employed in industry, academia, research institutes, medical research charities and hospital labs. Through planning and conducting experiments and analysing results, researchers learn more about the human body. Within academia, many work in post-doctoral positions on short-term contracts and obtaining permanent positions can be difficult. Outside academia, industry and charities rely on generating funding and therefore research can be results-driven: [www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career\\_options/alternatives\\_to\\_practice/medical\\_research.aspx](http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career_options/alternatives_to_practice/medical_research.aspx)

### **Medical Sales**

Medical representatives are the key contacts between the pharmaceutical / medical equipment industry and the medical profession. They have the responsibility of promoting their company's products directly to GPs and hospital doctors: <http://careers.abpi.org.uk/working-in-the-industry/commercial/Pages/default.aspx>;

[www.allaboutmedicalsales.com](http://www.allaboutmedicalsales.com)

### **Medical Translation**

A medical translator produces alternative versions of original medical materials in other languages. As well as the obvious requirements of language skills and familiarity with technical terminology, you would also need an ability to conduct any background research for appropriate terms, and an understanding of the cultural problems of translation: <http://beyondclinical.thecareersgroup.co.uk/professional-profiles/medical-translation/>

### **Nutritional Medicine**

The basic principles of nutritional medicine are to identify the underlying cause of illness, ensure the body receives the nutrients it needs to rebalance and repair itself, and to remove from the diet substances that aggravate the condition. Jobs exist in the health & medical services, and in the food and food supplement industries: [www.nutritionssociety.org](http://www.nutritionssociety.org)

### **Occupational Medicine**

Occupational medicine is a medical specialty that deals with the relation between work and health: preventing injuries and illness that can occur as a result of work and rehabilitating people back into the workforce if they have had an injury or illness: [www.som.org.uk](http://www.som.org.uk); [www.fom.ac.uk/education/careers](http://www.fom.ac.uk/education/careers)

### **Pharmaceutical Medicine (see also Scientific Research and Development below)**

Job opportunities for doctors in pharmaceutical medicine range from medical advisory positions and clinical research through to becoming medical director of a company. Patient contact is limited but still possible in the clinical trials area: <http://careers.abpi.org.uk/working-in-the-industry/research/clinical-studies/Pages/clinical-medicine.aspx>

### **Prison Medicine**

Medical officers provide GP services to prison inmates: [www.med-co.com/general-practice-behind-bars1](http://www.med-co.com/general-practice-behind-bars1)

### **Public Finance Accountancy (and the Accountancy professions)**

Public Finance Accountants are responsible for ensuring the effective operation of accounting and financial activities within public sector organisations. Many work for public bodies, such as local and central government and publicly funded organisations such as the NHS: [www.cipfa.org.uk](http://www.cipfa.org.uk). There are opportunities within the major accountancy firms who provide audit and consultancy services to public bodies, plus opportunities in other branches of the accountancy profession: [www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs\\_financial.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_financial.htm)

### **Public Health Medicine and other Public Health careers**

Public health medicine is a specialty which deals with health at the level of a general population rather than at the level of an individual. The role can vary from responding to outbreaks of disease that need a rapid response, such as food poisoning, to the long term planning of health care and health education: [www.fph.org.uk](http://www.fph.org.uk).

There are numerous other careers besides Medicine within Public Health: see [www.phorcast.org.uk](http://www.phorcast.org.uk); [www.rsph.org.uk](http://www.rsph.org.uk); [www.fph.org.uk/being\\_a\\_public\\_health\\_consultant](http://www.fph.org.uk/being_a_public_health_consultant)

### **Public Relations and Corporate Communications**

Media and communications staff build, maintain and manage the reputation of their clients or their employing organisations. Most NHS organisations have people responsible for effective communication with staff, patients and other stakeholders: [www.cipr.co.uk/content/careers-cpd](http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/careers-cpd)

### **Scientific Research and Development**

Graduates might work in scientific industries (including pharmaceutical manufacturing) as research technicians / assistants, trainee scientist (e.g. in clinical research, research and development, process, and production etc), analyst, bio- or medical-information officer, regulatory affairs officer, health & safety, and quality assurance. Others work in research within universities as research scientists, typically following a PhD: <http://careers.abpi.org.uk/working-in-the-industry/research/Pages/default.aspx>; [www.prospects.ac.uk/types\\_of\\_jobs\\_scientific\\_services.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/types_of_jobs_scientific_services.htm);

### **Sports Medicine**

Sports and exercise medicine is a medical specialty with a few NHS consultant posts across the UK, while most practitioners are in the private sector: [www.basem.co.uk](http://www.basem.co.uk); [www.fsem.co.uk](http://www.fsem.co.uk)

### **Travel Medicine**

Travel Medicine is an interdisciplinary specialty area so basic training can come from a broad range of specialties such as infectious diseases and tropical medicine, public health medicine, occupational health and primary care: [www.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk); [www.lstmliverpool.ac.uk](http://www.lstmliverpool.ac.uk); the Society of Apothecaries of London runs a 'Diploma in the Medical Care of Catastrophes': [www.apothecaries.org](http://www.apothecaries.org); RedR UK offers relevant training in disaster relief: [www.redr.org.uk](http://www.redr.org.uk)

### **Voluntary Work Overseas**

Health volunteers come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including doctors, nurses, midwives, health managers, educators and therapists, all fighting the ill health caused by poverty and strengthening the skills and capabilities of health professionals in disadvantaged communities: [www.vso.org.uk](http://www.vso.org.uk); [www.msfg.org](http://www.msfg.org)

## **Something completely different**

During their career, some people decide that medicine isn't for them or, at least, that they would like to explore the alternatives. It's estimated that around 50-60% of all graduate-level jobs are open to those from any discipline, so there's no reason why your medicine degree wouldn't be held in high regard by all sort of employers. The skills you will have developed on your course and subsequent training will be very transferable.

**Need help?** Current University of Sheffield students (and most UoS graduates within the last three years) can book a careers appointment to discuss their plans by telephoning 0114 222 0910. The information on our 'Careers with my degree' webpages is also useful: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/degree/med](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/degree/med). Once you have some ideas, see 'Explore your Options' [www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/students/worktypes). If you are thinking of leaving your medicine degree, talk to your tutors in the Medical School for their advice, and pick up 'Changing or Leaving Your Course' from the Careers Service. You should also book an appointment with a Careers Adviser to discuss your options.

Careers Service, 388 Glossop Road, Sheffield T: 0114 222 0910 [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students)

Email enquiry [www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/emailenquiry](http://www.shef.ac.uk/careers/students/emailenquiry)

University of Sheffield Careers Service (MZ) Nov 2014