



A Delegate's Review of the Peninsula Radiology Academy's 'Introduction to Radiology' one day course held Monday 9th November 2009

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Having already attended a taster week in Radiology, spoken extensively to current registrars and researched on the Internet, I thought I knew pretty much all that was worth knowing about radiology as a career and that attendance at the Plymouth Academy was likely to be covering old ground. I found myself pondering whether a 250 mile round trip from South Wales was worth the trek, and how much new information I would glean, more so immediately after a gruelling on-call in trauma and orthopaedics the day before the event.

To help me come to a decision, I delved a little deeper and after browsing the academy website¹ and reading reviews of previous years^{2,3}, I was left impressed by the accessibility, professionalism and depth of the content of the website and positive appraisals of preceding events, and felt assured it would not be a wasted journey to this far flung corner of the country.

Even prior to arrival, the acts of registering an interest, paying a nominal £10 and being kept informed by email were pleasantly straightforward and without fault. There was even an extra session arranged for the end of the day for those able to stay behind on preparing for recruitment, as well as a provisional timetable emailed out well in advance, covering a morning session of lecture based presentations and the afternoon for small group practical sessions.

The event itself is aimed at everyone and anyone expressing an interest in clinical radiology as a future career choice, from junior specialist trainees in other disciplines through foundation doctors to medical students wishing to dispel the misconceptions about those mysterious "others" who sit muttering, perched in front of a light box in a darkened room.

Upon arrival on the day itself I was not disappointed, being greeted by an impressive, clean new building set in the north of the city in the easily accessible Plymouth International Business Park, near Derriford Hospital. The day itself was due to start at 09.00 following registration from 08.30 and a much appreciated coffee.

¹ www.penra.org.uk

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[http://www.peninsuladeanery.nhs.uk/files/File/careers/Career Information/Careers A to Z/Clinical Radiology/Radiology Career Event review.pdf](http://www.peninsuladeanery.nhs.uk/files/File/careers/Career%20Information/Careers%20A%20to%20Z/Clinical%20Radiology/Radiology%20Career%20Event%20review.pdf)

³ <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=3045>

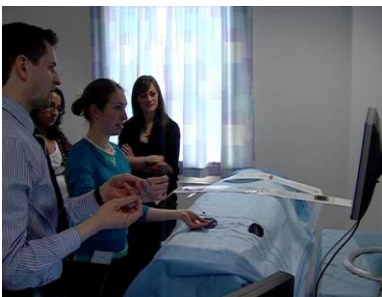
After the opportunity to mingle with other delegates and compose oneself, the introductory talk outlining the day's events was delivered in a nearby lecture room by two senior registrars. Following this an interesting well-illustrated presentation on the relatively short but exciting history of the specialty and future evolution was provided by another current registrar. This was followed by an in-depth insight into the profession by practicing consultant radiologists, with ample opportunity to ask questions. I found the "typical week in the life of a radiologist" most interesting, alongside the performance on interventional radiology delivered by an enthusiastic senior registrar. It was all very enlightening even though I thought I knew what was involved beforehand.

The next talk equally held the attention of everybody present as it was on applying for training, and although the national recruitment system for 2010 was still being finalised, impressively the information given was very up-to-date with a last minute hot-off-the-press addendum, as more information came to light during the day.

Lunch was as equally impressive, with an extensive satisfying buffet providing catering for all palates, and the presence and approachability of all of the morning's presenters, junior and senior, throughout lunch was heartening.

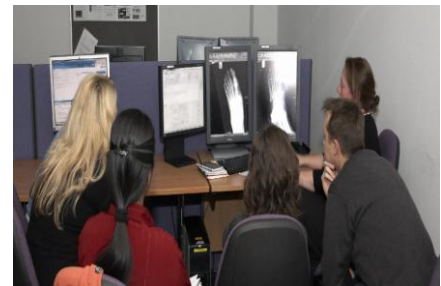
The afternoon session heralded five rotating small group teaching sessions, each manned by two registrars with the opportunity to get hands-on with some of the expensive equipment, normally only viewed from a distance.

First up was getting the gist of the VIST (vascular intervention simulator trainer) with some mock clinical cases requiring vascular catheterisation.



Next was an enhanced demonstration of the PACS (picture archiving and communications system) found throughout most hospitals.

The session with the Advantage Workstations was a particularly impressive exhibition of rendering high-resolution, colour 3-D imaging. We each had a terminal to ourselves to experiment with making it very interactive.



The fourth of the afternoon's small group sessions was a relaxed, informal coffee and chat with a consultant and a junior trainee allowing answers to questions on any topic which may be outstanding, whether on radiology, the academy, the area or in fact anything!



Lastly there was a practical ultrasound session where we each had the opportunity to scan a willing volunteer (from the academy!).

The extra workshop on preparing for recruitment rounded a very productive day off at around 17.00.

Aside from the actual technological resources available to play with, the presence of varying grades of trainees provided a great opportunity to ask the more pertinent questions which can sometimes be embarrassing in a larger group or in a more formal environment. The distribution of career planning and specialty interview literature was a welcome bonus.

Overall the day at the academy provided me with a more informed insight into the typical working life of a radiologist, the variety of workload encountered, as well as the numerous possible career paths open.

Most impressive personally, was the open state-of-the-art building with a friendly, relaxed atmosphere conducive to learning well supported by seniors, and the opportunity to get stuck in during the practical small group sessions. The chance to quiz current trainees of all grades throughout the day was appreciated, as they were in the same position only a year ago. It was obvious a lot of thought and commitment had gone into organising the event. My pleasant experiences throughout the day consolidated my decision in pursuing a future in clinical radiology.

As the only course of its kind in the country that I came across, it provides a very valuable service with almost all parts of the country represented by attendance. If you are curious, or even if you think you know what a career in radiology entails, the Introduction to Radiology day provides a thorough grounding, an opportunity to ask questions galore and practical hands-on exposure which is too good an opportunity to miss for anyone with an interest in radiology. After all, forewarned is forearmed.

The course was delivered by:



with organisation and administrative support from:



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