A Career in Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) in the West Midlands

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GUM Overview

- What is GU medicine?
- Desirable qualities
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- Recruitment & competition ratios
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What is Genito-Urinary Medicine?

- Genitourinary medicine (GUM) is a dynamic, fun speciality which provides care for all aspects of sexual health and HIV medicine.
- It is a patient-centred speciality which encompasses disciplines from general medicine, virology, microbiology, dermatology, gynaecology and public health, creating a unique and rewarding career. In many centres the specialty is combined with contraceptive services to offer a holistic service for patients.
- The specialty is evolving to accommodate the requirements of a modern sexual health and HIV service.
What is Genito-Urinary Medicine?

• There are many opportunities to develop specific sub-speciality interests, e.g. psychosexual medicine, genital dermatology, sexual assaults, vulnerable patient groups

• It is mainly outpatient and community clinic based but there are also opportunities within secondary and tertiary care, in particular with the management of HIV patients

• There are many academic and research opportunities
Desirable Qualities

• Non-judgemental
• Easily communicate with colleagues, other health professionals and patients
• Work well in a team
• Be adaptable, given the evolving nature of the specialty
• Have enthusiasm and leadership potential
• Be interested in complex ethical issues
• Not easily embarrassed, with a good sense of humour!
Career Path

Opportunity for clinical research

Completion of MRCP Required prior to ST3 application

Consultant

Speciality Registrar in GU medicine (4 years)

Core Medical Trainee (2 years)

Foundation Training (2 years)

Undergraduate medical degree

Opportunity for career break or to gain experience in specialised areas, teaching, leadership and management, or to follow a programme leading to MD or PhD
Advantages & Disadvantages

✔ It is a highly rewarding patient group
✔ The specialty is evolving – new areas of interest
✔ Lots of interesting pathology
✔ Interesting general medical complications
✔ Working within a structured MDT is very satisfying
✔ Involvement with outside agencies is rewarding
✔ Enthusiastic proactive training centres in the West Midlands

✗ Recent change in service structure can be unsettling
Typical Week

Each day will generally include two GU outpatient sessions:
- Either morning, afternoon or evening
- Either HIV or GU

Other activities that occur throughout the week:
- Dedicated audit and research sessions
- Viral load meeting (discussion of tricky HIV cases)
- Specialised clinics: Psycho-sexual, GU dermatology, Syphilis clinic, sexual assault, HIV-joint specialty clinics (lipid, renal, antenatal, hepatitis), Commercial Sex Worker clinics,
- Safeguarding meetings
- Weekly teaching: Guideline updates, conference feedback
- Monthly regional SpR teaching
- Journal club
# Recruitment and Competition Ratios

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Personal Qualities

- If you are considering a career as a GUM Physician, it is essential that you enjoy patient contact, multi-disciplinary team-working and possess and utilise good communication skills.

- It is important to feel comfortable broaching sensitive issues (such as sex and contraception); that you have good interpersonal skills and be non-intimidating and non-judgmental towards your patients.

- You are expected to have completed the MRCP examination too.
Personal Qualities

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Personal Qualities

Click link to view personal specification
The West Midlands Training Programme

• Duration
  o The GUM training programme is four years

• The regional GU Medicine training centres
  o There are currently nine training posts in the region. Each trainee is based at one of the main training centres in Birmingham (Whittall Street Clinic, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, Heartlands Hospital) for at least two of the four years. The remaining 1-2 years are spent at one of the other training centres (Coventry, Wolverhampton or Stoke).
The West Midlands Training Programme

• Content of the programme
  - Consistent with the training curriculum, in the first two years of training, trainees usually participate in 5-7 weekly GUM clinics and one HIV clinic to gain experience in the basics of GU and HIV medicine. During the last two years of training there is more focus on HIV medicine and more specialised GUM clinics and trainees often work in fewer weekly clinics so that they can focus on their research projects. Trainees are also expected to complete a block of inpatient HIV care for at least six months, although how this is provided will vary according to the training centre you are working in. During the four years, trainees are expected to obtain a number of certificates; Diploma in GU Medicine, Diploma for the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Diploma in HIV Medicine. They are also expected to gain competencies in insertion and removal of long-acting reversible forms of contraception. These skills can be gained at the local contraception clinics. Throughout the training programme, presentation at regional and national meetings, through poster and oral media, is encouraged. There are many opportunities to teach undergraduates, postgraduates and peers.
The West Midlands Training Programme

• Regional Training Programme
  - Trainees are expected to attend and contribute towards the monthly regional training programme for GU Medicine, which rotates between all of the centres. The regional training closely adheres to the 2014 GU Medicine curriculum
The West Midlands Training Programme

• **Examinations** – the diploma in GU Medicine examination is usually taken in the second year (ST4) and the diploma in HIV examination, which equates to an exit exam, should be taken during the fourth year (ST6) of the programme.

• **Contraception qualifications** – the diploma of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is mandatory and consists of online and practical training. Trainees are also expected to gain the letters of competence for insertion and removal of long-acting reversible contraception.

• **Courses** – there are several mandatory courses that are laid out on the JRCPTB GUM curriculum.
The West Midlands Training Programme

- **On call**
  - Trainees are expected to participate in the on-call rota at their main centre of training. The on-call may be purely for HIV inpatient care and GUM advice, or general infectious disease, depending on the centre. The frequency of on-call varies between centres but is typically approximately 1:5. There is no resident night-duty at any of the training centres but trainees may be called in the night for advice.
The West Midlands Training Programme

- Career development opportunities:
  - **Teaching** – regular and frequent teaching of medical students, GP and other specialty trainees, nurses and postgraduate doctors
  - **Research** – HIV is a fast-moving field in research and there is always new knowledge to keep up-to-date with
  - **Audit**: all trainees are expected to regularly engage in audit
  - **International, national and regional conferences** – attendance at and participation in oral presentations, case presentations and poster presentations
  - **Trainee representative roles** – regional and national level, to develop leadership skills and gain experience working on committees.
Commitment to Specialty

• There aren’t that many F2 posts on GU medicine but it is possible to show commitment in other ways
• GU taster week
• Careers fair
• Quality improvement projects, audit work, conference posters/presentations
• Attendance at national conferences e.g. BASHH, BHIVA
• Consider more specific experiences:
  • STIF course
  • RCP specialty spotlight sessions
Where to go for more information…

- NHS health careers
- JRCPTB specialty page and curriculum
- ST3 Recruitment
- RCP (London), Specialty spotlight
- British Association for Sexual Health and HIV
- Health Education England, West Midlands
- Ask your local GU department – everyone will be happy to help!