Renal Medicine

Renal medicine is an exciting specialty offering the challenge of looking after both acutely ill patients and those with a chronic disease requiring long term care with the help of a multidisciplinary team. The majority of trainee renal physicians receive training as specialist registrars in both Renal and General Internal Medicine, although consultant renal physicians in tertiary centres generally do not undertake acute general medical duties. General medical problems in patients on renal replacement therapy (transplant or dialysis patients) who are admitted are generally managed by nephrologists. Nephrology works closely with many other medical specialities which reflects the breadth and diversity of medical problems that renal patients have. From working alongside anaesthetists managing the sickest patients in the hospitals, to immunologists discussing intricacies of mismatches for transplant patients, to rheumatologists balancing immunosuppressant therapy in systemic vasculitis. The diversity of the clinical work is what most trainees enjoy.

All renal physicians take charge for patients with end stage renal failure requiring long term renal replacement therapy either by dialysis or transplantation. This gives nephrologists the opportunity to get to know patients extremely well whilst offering a specialised and unique services. Severe ‘single-organ acute kidney injury/AKI’ should be managed by renal medics and we aim to get these patients promptly to the ward to assess, diagnose and treat efficiently. Often these patients require dialysis acute via temporary vascaths. If the diagnosis of the AKI is not immediate apparent or we suspect glomerular pathology then a renal biopsy is performed by the renal registrars. Both these core procedures you will receive training in by senior registrars and consultants. AKI is also a common component to general medical admissions and it generates a frequent request for a renal referral which the renal registrars undertake under the supervision and support of the duty consultant.

Renal transplantation is performed in tertiary centres with most patients continuing long term follow up, by nephrologists from their referring hospital. Throughout your training you will spend a minimum of six months as the medical transplant registrar working alongside surgical colleagues on the acute transplant ward. You generally will have a minimum of 2.5 years at Oxford doing exclusive renal medicine with the other 2yrs spent in Reading or Oxford doing renal and acute general medicine. Over your clinical years there are many opportunities for research either laboratory based (underlying mechanisms of renal disease, immunology of transplantation); clinical based (examining effects of treatment on various renal conditions), or epidemiological (looking at incidence of various renal diseases in different populations which impact on the planning and delivery of renal services). The opportunity to undertake research is a strength of Oxford deanery and TPDs support and encourage out of programme time for this.

Renal Medicine in the Oxford deanery has two base hospitals: Churchill Hospital in Oxford and Royal Berkshire in Reading. Each of these base hospitals cover satellite
hospitals which draws work into the unit but they are not part of the registrar rotation. This hugely helps when deciding where to live as you not rotating around many hospitals which can greatly increase your commute.

Dedicated consultant led renal registrar teaching occurs monthly across the deanery.

Oxford can also boost that it is does the most pancreas transplantation work nationally with around 55 SPKs (simultaneous pancreas and Kidney) or PTAs (pancreas transplant alone) per annum. The development of a pancreas replacement MDT with endocrinologist, surgeons and transplant physicians you can learn about the options open to these rather unique set of patients. Oxford also does 200 kidney transplants of which around 28% are living donations. It dialysis programme consists of ~420 pts on Hemo and ~100 pts. Reading has ~420pts on dialysis and receives its transplant patients, from Oxford, 6 months out.

Both hospitals have dedicated renal wards with facilities to dialyse and plasma exchange at the bedside.

The Thames Valley itself is a wonderful place to live and learn. With Oxford being a proud university city it offers excellent cultural and sporting activities to suit all tastes. The infamous Oxford Tube is a 24 hours bus service to the heart of London which allows you to enjoy the benefits of the capital. Heathrow and Birmingham International Airports are under an hour away to allow you to escape work on holidays. Its proximity to motorway network, via the M40, allows to you reach the North and South of England with relative ease.

Family life is fantastic as the countryside is on tap with walks and a great selection of ‘gastro pubs.’

Overall, Renal medicine in the Thames valley offers fantastic clinical training, with dedicated consultants supporting you at every turn in an area of the country that not many trainees want to leave when they finish.