

## Ten Questions about being an Advanced Practice and Consultant Physiotherapist

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### 1. Please describe briefly your job role and responsibilities

- I have two roles. One day a week, I am an Advanced Practice Physiotherapist (although my job title is Clinical Lead) in a musculoskeletal physiotherapy outpatient department. Clinically I undertake MSK triage, I am also the lead for the hydrotherapy service and, with the other Clinical Leads (APP), I help with staff and service development.
- Three days a week, I am a Consultant Physiotherapist within the neurosurgical spinal department. I run clinics independently and with the neurosurgeons. I provide clinical leadership, training and support to musculoskeletal services delivering spinal triage within the South East London & Kent Regional Spinal Network.
- I am on the executive committee of the Advanced Practice Physiotherapy Network (APPN) and the National Back Pain-Clinical Network (NBP-CN).
- I have recently been successful in getting a PhD fellowship through the Dunhill Medical Trust. Therefore I will be shortly be stepping aside from a lot of my clinical duties for the next four years while I concentrate on research and studying.

### 2. Please describe briefly your career pathway so far

- I qualified in 2001 and completed Junior rotations at St George's Hospital, London and after a short period of being a locum I joined University College London Hospital's as a band 6 MSK physiotherapist and later became a band 7 within Occupational Health.

- During my time at UCLH I completed a MSc from the University of Hertfordshire, I also had the opportunity to gain experience and training in performing MSK triage clinics.
- In 2011 I joined King's College Hospital (KCH) as a Clinical Lead (APP) predominantly undertaking work for the spinal neurosurgery department. I was very lucky, when just over a year ago the spinal neurosurgery department upgraded my post to Consultant.

3. Have you completed any postgraduate education courses relevant to your role?

Completing a post-registration MSc has been extremely helpful to embed and enhance my knowledge and skills. However, it has been my involvement in professional groups and clinical meetings that I think has been most helpful.

4. What have been the challenges in achieving consultant level practice?

To achieve consultant level practice I think you have to be motivated and willing to negotiate with your manager and team that all four pillars of practice are important and need to be developed.

In a busy clinical environment, carving out time for the other aspects can be hard work - there are always competing demands! As a fairly new Consultant working on increasing my horizons can be challenging!

5. What advice would you give to a new graduate keen to develop as an advanced practice and consultant level Physiotherapist?

- Spend time being curious about different ways of working and doing things and take up opportunities that interest you. On the whole, there is no need to rush 'up the career ladder'
- As well as academic study, I think networking is important, join networks or professional/clinical/research groups and attend their meetings.
- Look what is happening outside of physiotherapy and how physiotherapy can provide a solution.

6. What personal qualities/characteristics are important to have for your role as a consultant Physiotherapist?

I think I may have covered this before in my earlier answers. I think enthusiasm, curiosity, ability to horizon scan and willingness to work hard!

7. How to do measure your effectiveness as a consultant-level physio?

This is a tricky question. I think it depends on what you and your employer rate as important. Is it that you have brought in research money or been published? Is it that you have redeveloped a service or patient pathway? Is it that you are leading on national frameworks or projects? Ultimately, it should come down to the patient. Is what you are doing having a widespread patient benefit.

8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Hopefully I will have completed my PhD and have a clinical academic career.

9. What type of CPD activities do you do at this level?

Conferences and meetings mainly. I also try to use social media to keep abreast of what is going on. I also will do the occasional taught course e.g. Injection Module.

10. What would be your 3 top tips to an experienced Physiotherapist keen to develop as an consultant physio?

1. Networking is vital.
2. Get involved in a project outside of your immediate working environment.
3. Join a committee