



Book Review

Succeeding in Your Consultant Medical Interview **By Robert Ghosh**

“Succeeding in Your Consultant Medical Interview”

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Most hospital doctors aim to achieve consultant status. Competition is high and in order to be successful it is important to apply for a suitable post and prepare well for the interview. This book aims to help candidates understand the interview process and make them aware of the importance of good preparation. The book covers the various elements this preparation should include and extensive summaries of “hot topics” the applicant needs to be aware of.

This book is organised into distinct sections. The first twelve (often quite short) chapters concentrate on the practical preparation for the application and the interview. After introducing the context and philosophy of consultant interviews the book invites the readers to reflect on their readiness to apply for a consultant position. It then guides them through the process of checking whether they meet the appointment criteria and researching the Trust they are interested in prior to submitting an application. The readers are advised how to arrange a formal pre-interview visit and what appointments to arrange for that visit. In preparation for the interview date the importance of portfolio preparation, interview practice before the day and dress code are discussed. The book also gives information about the likely people to be involved in the interview panel and how to prepare any presentation the candidate has been asked to give. It gives general advice for the appropriate conduct during the interview and how to plan for it. It also gives general strategies for answering questions and gives useful examples of the type of questions commonly asked in consultant interviews.

The next section of the book has three chapters discussing the Department of Health, the NHS Plan and other bodies and philosophies evolved from it. These chapters allow the reader to get up to date with the relevant developments in the NHS and identify areas that would benefit from further investigation prior to the interview.

This is followed by a brief section discussing topics relating to professional bodies like the General Medical Council and Postgraduate Medical Education

and Training Board and concepts like appraisal. Other areas covered are the British Medical Association, (Royal) Colleges, Modernising Medical Careers, Hospital At Night and the European Working Time Directive. Again the readers can ensure they are up to date with relevant bodies and concepts associated with healthcare and their chosen specialty.

In addition to clinical skills a consultant needs a wider knowledge of management and political topics. The next section of the book discusses leadership and management as important elements of fulfilling a consultant role. It introduces general principles and the Trust Board Structure and Trust Finances. It goes through a selection of other qualities required of a consultant. Clinical governance, quality assurance, clinical effectiveness and openness, risk management and complaints, clinical audit and research, continuing education and development, legal and ethical issues all have a chapter dedicated to them.

The final four chapters feel like a mixture of additional information related to different elements previously discussed. One chapter is dedicated to other key reports. The next two chapters discuss how to deal with approach or "scenario" questions and how to conclude the interview. Finally references are given to help readers find any further information.

There is a summary of key points at the end of each chapter allowing the reader to scan the content quickly.

What I found most useful were the sample questions and general strategies for answering them. It will allow me to prepare for my next interview by going through possible questions in advance and having time to think about aspects I feel are important to include in the answer. This will help me feel more prepared. While I was aware of most of the background information and concepts discussed I found it helpful to have a brief summary of relevant points to ensure I have no gaps I need to address in my preparation.

This book is relevant for anyone preparing to apply for a consultant post. While it is mainly geared to trainees who have got or will soon receive their Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) it is also very useful for other doctors who have achieved a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR).

The NHS is undergoing regular changes and it is likely that the "hot topics" and key reports covered will not remain as up to date as they are at the moment. As far as the layout is concerned I would have preferred it if all interview preparation chapters were kept together and the last two had not been tagged on at the end of the book. Having said that I think the book overall fulfils its aim well and will allow candidates to prepare as efficiently as possible for the all important consultant interview.

This is a very concise book outlining the preparation recommended prior to applying for a consultant post and gives excellent practical guidance. This not only includes the interview process and preparation but also essential background information. The reader will gain the knowledge and skills required to do well in the interview. The layout of the book enables candidates

to concentrate on the elements they identify as most relevant to them and allows them to be well prepared even if time is limited.

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