Thoracic Radiology – A Subspecialty Career

Dr Gillian Bain and Dr Harmee Chana, Consultant Radiologists
London North West Hospitals NHS Trust

Career Pathway

Thoracic imaging encompasses all imaging related to the lungs, including lung cancer imaging and related diagnostic procedures such as CT or ultrasound guided biopsies; imaging of acute and chronic pulmonary diseases including pulmonary embolic disease, pulmonary hypertension, interstitial lung disease, congenital lung diseases, pulmonary infectious diseases and ITU thoracic imaging.

Thoracic imaging can be practiced in a tertiary centre, a teaching hospital or in a DGH setting. Jobs can involve pure thoracic imaging or can be combined with general imaging depending on the setting.

At least one year subspecialty training in thoracic imaging is required. Further subspecialisation is possible in interstitial lung disease or lung cancer imaging and can involve longer subspecialty training.

Subspecialty training will be offered by most training programs in the UK. There are also a number of specific fellowships available in the UK and abroad (see right).

Pros and Cons

Ample opportunity for thoracic imaging work in DGH setting, particularly as part of a wider remit and can be combined with other areas such as general radiology or other subspecialty interest. This allows radiologists to maintain other skills and interests.

A small number of posts are available for thoracic imaging in a tertiary setting, allowing these radiologists to become focused on particular areas of thoracic imaging. These posts are often associated with a significant research element and can involve also involve advanced interventional procedures such as radiofrequency ablation.

On call prospects will depend on the type of hospital in which the post is located.

Non-NHS work will depend on post and location. There is scope for private work but generally this is not a sub-specialty with a large non-NHS work load.

Related National Organisations

British Society of Thoracic Imaging (BSTI)
http://www.bsti.org.uk

Royal College of Radiologists (RCR)
http://www.rcr.ac.uk

British Thoracic Society (BTS)
http://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk

Training Opportunities

All training rotations offer thoracic imaging subspecialty training. In addition there are specific fellowship posts in London:

Royal Brompton Hospital (1-2 years)
Contact: Professor David Hansell
Radiology Department
Royal Brompton Hospital
Sydney St
London SW3 6NP

Kings College Hospital - Thoracic imaging with cardiac/haematology-oncology experience.
Contact: Dr Sujai Desai
Radiology Department
King’s College Hospital
Denmark Hill
London SE5 9RS

St. George’s Hospital London
Cardiothoracic subspecialty post (5th/6th year)
Contact: Dr Johnny Vlahos
Radiology Department
St George’s University Hospital
Blackshaw Rd
London SW17 0QT

Outside London:

St. Vincent’s University Hospital,
Dublin. Subspecialist cardiac CT/MRI/thoracic fellowship post.
Contact: Dr Jonathan Dodd
Radiology Department
St. Vincent’s University Hospital
University College Dublin
Ireland

Papworth Hospital
Subspecialty Fellowship in Cardiothoracic Imaging (1 year) - two posts in Papworth Hospital covering cardiothoracic imaging but with the opportunity to further subspecialise
Contact: Dr Nick Screaton
Radiology Department
Papworth NHS Foundation Trust
Papworth Everard
Cambridge CB23 8RE
SE5 9RS

Imaging guided intervention, including biopsies, thoracocentesis and radiofrequency/microwave ablation can be part of the remit of a chest radiologist. The type and number of interventional procedures performed by thoracic radiologists however depends on local factors and will vary between jobs.