

This series provides insight into the careers of retired and actively serving occupational physicians. The interview series has supported a collaboration amongst our peers in developing projects on compiling the history of occupational medicine. On this occasion, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Alan Home.

Dr Farhan Shahzad, Consultant Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Sydney

Farhan: *It's a pleasure to meet you Dr Alan Home. Please tell us about yourself, your personal life, training and how you developed an interest in Occupational & Environmental Medicine.*

Alan: I completed my medical degree at UWA in Perth in 1984. After hospital training I worked in general practice for three years. During that time I joined an industrial practice, at which I treated a number of patients with RSI. This piqued my interest in occupational medicine. I then had the opportunity to work at a further practice in Canning Vale, an industrial area in Perth. I undertook further training in Occupational Medicine in the UK and Australia, before commencing specialist practice at SJOG Murdoch. I gained an interest in independent medical examinations. It was apparent to me that occupational physicians, by nature of their training and experience are well suited to IME practice. They are able to assess the psychological, industrial and employment aspects of each case, particularly as it pertains to assessing capacity. After completing further impairment assessment training in the USA, I assisted Workcover in the implementation, training and peer review of specialists in the use of the WorkCover Impairment Guidelines.

Changes in my personal life have allowed me to travel and work in four different states. It is interesting to see the differences in the management and the assistance given to workers in various jurisdictions. The experience also assists me when undertaking IME work, and with report writing in general.

It remains very important for trainee occupational physicians to maintain balance in their work, and to get out of their rooms and visit workplaces. Ultimately, your ability to assess and advise clients about work capacity and rehabilitation options is predicated by your knowledge of work, workplaces and risks in each workplace.

Farhan: Where do you see the future of occupational medicine practice?

Alan: The future of the specialty is bright as there are a variety of important roles in which our Fellows can continue to work, including company and government-based roles, in addition to private clinical practice. I know some OPs who have embedded themselves in pain clinics or who work in close relationships with orthopaedic practices, to manage post-operative vocational rehabilitation.

It remains important for the Faculty to continue a strong training program and to continue to mentor trainees and younger specialists. I am particularly interested in improving assessment and report writing skills as these are essential skills for practicing OP clinicians.

Farhan: What message do you have for trainees and Fellows:

Alan: Again, I would encourage trainees and new graduates to seek a variety of training posts and work-roles that allow exposure to different workplaces.