



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 Dwight Dowda.

Dr Farhan Shahzad, Consultant Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Sydney

Dwight: After HSC in 1968, I commenced Medicine at Sydney University in 1969 interrupting studies to do a Bachelor of Medical Science degree by research in the Department of Pathology in 1973.

I went to Royal North Shore Hospital as a Clinical Student and graduated in 1976 – I then went straight back to North Shore Hospital as an intern, resident and then ultimately Registrar in Neurosurgery. In 1979 I joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service at Broken Hill after which I returned to Sydney, to complete in 1980-1981 my Master of Public Health degree by research at Sydney University.

Farhan: *Please tell us how you developed an interest in Occupational & Environmental Medicine?*

Dwight: In 1982 I successfully answered an advertisement by the Electricity Commission of New South Wales, for an Occupational Physician although I didn't have formal occupational medicine qualifications, because at that time, none were available. I was exposed to an incredible variety of occupational medicine challenges in the Electricity Commission, and attended whatever relevant courses were available at the time. My Fellowship in occupational medicine within the newly formed Australasian College of Occupational Medicine was granted after close scrutiny of my experience and work practice by the Board of Censors.

Farhan: *Let's talk about your achievements, memories and highlights of your career.*

Dwight: Starting my career under the guidance and mentorship of the "fathers of Australian occupational medicine" in the early 1980s was one of the highlights. To work with, and be mentored by, such luminaries as David Ferguson, David Douglas and Bill Nelson was a privilege.

In the late 1980s and through the 1990s my role as a Censor of the College (later Faculty), saw me involved in developing and marking Fellowship examinations, and I was given the role of MOPS Censor to oversee the development of what was to become the CPD program.

Another highlight since 2007 has been my close involvement with the development of Fiji's new Workmen's Compensation system, as this small country embarked on ambitious labour reforms. This has meant going to Fiji once or twice a year at the request of the Fijian Department of Labour, teaching Fijian medical practitioners

It has been an ongoing honour and pleasure working alongside like-minded and committed colleagues and friends, sharing our amazing voyage from the beginnings of the specialty practice of occupational medicine in Australia through to the present.

Farhan: Indeed, no doubt, you've had a successful and inspiring career. You've been a pioneer in occupational medicine in Australia. It was a pleasure talking to you and thanks for sharing.

The original interview took 1 hour and was transcribed to approx. 3000 words which are hard to encapsulate within the limits of the newsletter. However, I do hope in time I would be able to compile this into a podcast version while continuing this series on the newsletter. -Farhan.