

# Why I love out-of-hours work

If you haven't done any GP OOH work for some time, I wonder if I might persuade you to try it again?

I like it because it feels like the medicine I was trained to do, requiring all my general practice skills and involving treating a complete range of ages, sexes and conditions. Also, it's about same-day illness management instead of juggling co-morbidities and multiple drug therapies on a patient review basis, although obviously that is there in the background. There can, of course, be some social problems, but again it's usually possible to suggest solutions to a patient's immediate issue, rather than having to deal with long-term possibly insoluble problems. It keeps you on your diagnostic toes and it's usually just the presenting complaint that is your patient's major concern.

Most importantly, there's hardly any paperwork or the need to take any work home. Basically, you get to clock on and off.

Being chauffeured around is pretty great too – having someone whose job it is to find the house for you instead of struggling on your own with a map or a satnav. Your driver is also a major security factor. The cars are well-equipped with drugs, oxygen and other equipment and, of course, telephone and internet connections, making it easy to look up patients' details.

I love the fact that patients are grateful to see you and say thank you. Believe it or not I do actually see some of them more than once.

The terms of employment are good too. As a salaried doctor, I have a regular income from which all the usual deductions have been made plus eight weeks' holiday and one week of study leave guaranteed. Earlier this year, despite immunisation, I came down with probable influenza and was able to take sick leave without any trouble. Other sorts of leave are possible too.

So what are the downsides? There is an intensity to the work, particularly at the weekends, but this is now true of all branches of practice. The late night finishing times can be tiring, although it depends on your early morning commitments the next day. Some people actually

find these shift patterns fit better with their family lives.

One thing I personally prefer is coming home when the roads are extremely quiet and there's no rush-hour traffic, although you may get that going into work.

So have I convinced you to look again at OOH work?

Mary Anne Burrow, Scottish OOH GP

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