psychiatrists are all medically qualified doctors who can deal with physical health as well as mental health problems and prescribe medication, whereas psychologists have a degree in psychology and are non-medically trained professionals who are primarily concerned with how people think, act, react and interact. Psychotherapists can come from a variety of backgrounds and have trained in particular forms of talking therapies.

WORK EXPERIENCE IN PSYCHIATRY

Work experience in any healthcare setting is a great way to improve your knowledge and understanding of psychiatry, and also:

- gives you the opportunity to develop skills and qualities which are needed to become a psychiatrist, e.g. communication, teamwork and problem-solving
- provides solid experience to offer on application forms and interviews and helps improve prospects for entry to higher education
- increases self-understanding, maturity, independence and self-confidence, especially in the workplace
- improves the understanding of the work environment and employees’ expectations.

There are many hospitals throughout the UK which offer work experience to final-year students and medical students.

PSYCHIATRY IN BOOKS AND FILMS

Mental health problems are a popular topic in literature and film. Here’s just a short list of films and books which you may find interesting; they present varied perspectives on mental illness and its treatment.

Books:
- Lucky by Alice Sebold,
- Prozac Nation by Elizabeth Wurzel,
- Wasted by Marya Hornbacker,
- The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath,
- The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks,
- Catcher in the Rye by JD Salinger,
- The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon,

Graphic novels:
- Marbles: Mania, Depression, Michelangelo, and Me by Ellen Forney,
- HOAX Psychosis Blues by Ravi Thornton,
- Worry Wart by Dani Abram,
- The Bad Doctor by Ian Williams.

Films and TV series:
- Side Effects,
- One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,
- Birdy,
- Rainman,
- Psycho,
- A Clockwork Orange,
- Ordinary People,
- Annie Hall,
- A Beautiful Mind,
- The Aviator,
- Silver Linings Playbook,
- Still Alice.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT A CAREER IN PSYCHIATRY PLEASE EMAIL US AT CAREERS@RCPSYCH.AC.UK AND CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE WWW.RCPSYCH.AC.UK
FIND OUT ABOUT A CAREER IN PSYCHIATRY

Many of us are affected by mental health problems. A career in psychiatry will give you the opportunity to study the science of what shapes us as people, to understand the psychological, social and physical factors of illness and how to help people with mental health disorders. It is really important that we have the best people working in this field of medicine.

WHAT DO PSYCHIATRISTS DO?

Psychiatrists are doctors who look after patients with mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, intellectual disabilities, dementia and schizophrenia. Management of these disorders involves a combination of measures, such as medications, psychological therapy, improving home environments and social networks. Treatment depends on a wide range of professionals, including psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists. The psychiatrist needs to work together with these professionals as part of a team.

HOW DO I BECOME A PSYCHIATRIST?

All psychiatrists are qualified doctors, so first you must gain a place at medical school.

Academically, you will need top grades in your Highers or A-Levels, which should include a couple of science subjects. Most universities will expect you to do well in the UKCAT and will want to interview you. There is a lot of competition for places at medical school, but this will give you a chance to challenge yourself and show how committed you are to a career in medicine.

Successful candidates need:
- good academic qualifications
- enthusiasm, with good interpersonal skills
- a wide range of outside interests
- evidence of interest in a caring profession.

WHAT MAKES PSYCHIATRY SPECIAL?

As a psychiatrist, you really could make a difference to someone’s life, and help them regain their self-esteem and happiness. Psychiatry is an excellent career choice for someone who has an interest in neuroscience, a curiosity about what makes people tick and enjoys working as part of a team. There is real variety in psychiatry. Every day can be different and every person you see will be unique. Psychiatrists work across a person’s lifespan, from childhood to old age. They see their patients as whole people, working with their mental and physical health, and will work with them to improve all aspects of their lives. It’s also a good choice for doctors who want a good work/life balance.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY?

Psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists are trained to see and help those suffering from psychological problems. The main difference is that