WHAT IS CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY?
Clinical pharmacology encompasses all aspects of the use of medicines, from drug discovery and development through to their application in clinical practice. Its core goal is to improve patient care by understanding the relationship between drugs and patients. Clinical pharmacologists are clinicians with specialties in clinical medicine, toxicology, pharmacology and pharmacokinetics. Their work can have a significant impact on patient outcomes and healthcare costs.

WHAT IS A CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGIST?
A clinical pharmacologist is a specialist in medicines management. They work in a variety of roles within the NHS, including hospital wards, community pharmacies and research studies. They can also work in the pharmaceutical industry and contribute to drug development.

WHAT DOES A CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGIST DO?
Clinical pharmacologists carry out a range of roles, including:
- Prescribing and managing medications
- Conducting research studies
- Teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Contributing to the development of medicines policy and regulation
- Providing clinical services to patients

WHY IS CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY IMPORTANT?
Clinical pharmacology is essential for improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. It involves understanding the effects of drugs on patients and developing strategies to optimise treatment. Clinical pharmacologists play a vital role in ensuring that patients receive the best possible care.

CLINICAL MEDICINE
Clinical pharmacologists are clinicians with specialties in clinical medicine, toxicology, pharmacology and pharmacokinetics. Their work can have a significant impact on patient outcomes and healthcare costs.

TOXICOLOGY
Toxicology is the study of the effects of drugs on the body. Clinical pharmacologists use toxicology to understand how drugs work and how they can be used safely and effectively.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
Clinical pharmacologists carry out research to understand the effects of drugs on patients. They use this information to improve patient care and develop new treatments.

MEDICINES POLICY & REGULATION
Clinical pharmacologists contribute to the development of medicines policy and regulation. They work with regulatory bodies to ensure that new drugs are safe and effective.

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY
Clinical pharmacologists can work in the pharmaceutical industry, contributing to drug development and providing valuable insights into patient care.

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Am I eligible to become a CPT trainee?
Entry into CPT training at ST3 is possible following successful completion of core training and training in clinical pharmacology. CPT trainees should have membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) UK full, or membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP) full, or membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Faculty of Homeopathic Medicine (MRCGP FHOM) full.

Trainees are expected to undertake in-depth training in at least one advanced training module in their training. This training can be completed by either of two routes: core medical training (CMT) or core specialty training (CST). ST2 trainees will be organized into the CPT programme at the beginning of ST3.

For further information, please visit the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board ST3 and provides training alongside CMT/CPT, combining job security with the opportunity to undertake advanced training in clinical pharmacology. The ST1 ACF scheme offers a 1-year foundation training post in the discipline of Clinical Pharmacology. Applications can be made at any time and are assessed by the Royal College of Physicians: CPT specialty spotlight (ACF scheme) or ST3 and provides training alongside CMT/CPT, combining job security with the opportunity to undertake advanced training in clinical pharmacology. The ST1 ACF scheme offers a 1-year foundation training post in the discipline of Clinical Pharmacology. Applications can be made at any time and are assessed by the Royal College of Physicians: CPT specialty spotlight (ACF scheme).

WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT TRAINING IN CPT?
I absolutely love working on the different aspects of the role in a way that suits you.

It’s diverse – there are few training opportunities that will equip you as well.

It’s intellectually challenging – you’re most likely to see patients with complex illness.

It’s exciting and you get the flexibility necessary to allow doctors with different sub-specialty interests to progress through training. Notably, training is usually as a clinical lecturer employed by returning to the programme, trainees can provide run-through training in depth, through a funded PhD. After graduation, they will become junior consultants in their chosen field. The CPT curriculum is broad in scope. It is designed to attract high-quality trainees into the discipline by providing the necessary career structure and training in clinical pharmacology and medical education.

By the end of their training, all trainees are expected to:

Understand and work within the current drug regulatory framework

Understand mechanisms of drug action to extrapolate likely effects of new drugs and to devise appropriate dosing

Anticipate, detect, manage, report and analyse adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and prescribing errors on stable dose

Prescribe rationally for individual patients

Advise on the management of patients presenting with toxicology issues

Understand and influence what determines the pattern of use of medicines in populations

Understand and work within the current drug regulatory framework

Critically evaluate literature and understand statistical techniques

Understand mechanisms of drug action to extrapolate likely effects of new drugs and to devise appropriate dosing

What will I learn during CPT training?

Core curriculum

By the end of the training, all trainees are expected to be able to:

Pharmacokinetics and drug actions

Understanding of drug-receptor interactions

Understand the mechanisms of drug action

Understand mechanisms of drug action to extrapolate likely effects of new drugs and to devise appropriate dosing

Advanced training modules

Trainees expected to undertake depth training but can also undertake advanced training modules outside training. PHD/Training Fellowship is provided at the beginning of the training. Notably, training is usually as a clinical lecturer employed by returning to the programme, trainees can provide run-through training in depth, through a funded PhD. After graduation, they will become junior consultants in their chosen field.

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