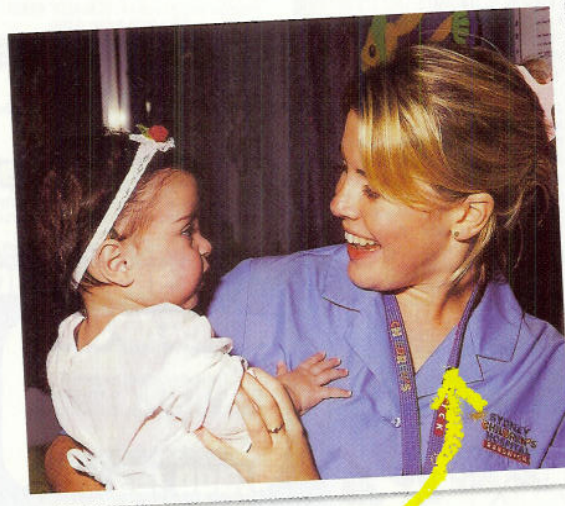


wanna work in...

health

Think you could make a career out of helping the sick? Don't mind lots of training and long hours? Then grab your lab coat and read on!



Gemma Clark, 21, a paediatric nurse at Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick, spends her days helping sick kids.

What course did you study?

"I went to the University of Technology, Sydney, to complete a Bachelor of Nursing, Midwifery and Health. It took three years full-time and entry was based on the marks I'd achieved in my HSC. I graduated in 2002."

Was the course difficult?

"The course wasn't really hard; you just had to have a general interest in what you were learning about. We studied the systems of the body and what happens when the body gets sick. A lot of people became upset when we discussed death but nurses need to have a strong stomach for those things. As I've completed a university degree I'm classified as a registered nurse, which means we do the general nursing, give medication and do a lot more nursing care than enrolled nurses, who only have to complete a TAFE course."

How did you go from uni student to paediatric nurse?

"I decided to go into paediatric nursing because I really love kids, and my first job after finishing my degree was where I am now, at Sydney Children's Hospital. It's different for each hospital, but most put you on a New Graduates Program in your first year out of uni where you get to spend four months in three different units, to get a feel for different areas. At the end of 12 months you tell them what area you would like to go into and they try to find you a job there. I spent time in a cardiac/renal ward; it's full of kids with

cardiac problems, like holes in their hearts, and lots of problems that children are born with, like kidney problems. Then I worked in children's intensive care, then a neuro/orthopaedic ward with head injuries and broken bones. That's where I am now."

What does your average day involve?

"It's shift work, and each working day starts at either 7am, 1:15pm or 9:30pm. Each shift goes for about eight to 10 hours. When starting

the shift we take over from the nurses on the previous shift and are given patients to care for. Next is doing observations; checking that the patients are in a stable condition, giving them medication, checking they're eating, drinking and weeing, giving them a bath or shower, playing with them, distracting them when they have painful procedures or treatments that they're scared of. The kids are from newborns up to 16 years old.

"We also teach parents. If children have a new diagnosis we teach the parents how to look after the child, and sometimes teach new parents baby care – like how to bathe their newborn and change their nappies."

Best bits?

"Seeing the patients get better."

Hardest bits?

"When kids don't make it and when you have difficult cases."



Log onto www.wagenet.gov.au for info on award rates for occupations, or contact the association for each occupation for wage details.

How much will I earn?

The award wage for health workers differs in each state. A first-year nurse in NSW earns about \$35,000 and a first-year medical intern in NSW can expect about \$42,690, plus overtime and shift penalties. A fully qualified dietitian starts at around \$37,000 and a physiotherapist starts on about \$39,400 in a public hospital.

So you want to be a doctor?



Allison Moore, 25, is a pre-intern at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. She tells us what to expect.

"You'll be studying for a looong time"

"I completed a Bachelor of Medical Science at Sydney Uni with honours, which took four years. Then I applied for the graduate medical program, which was a four-year course. I'm just about to start one year as an intern working full-time in a hospital. That's when you're provisionally registered as a doctor. You can't practise independently until you've finished the internship. Then, to become a specialist, you have to train for several more years."

"After years of study, you become an intern"

"As an intern you do all the same jobs as doctor, except for signing prescriptions. We turn up in the morning and do a ward round, which involves seeing all of the patients that are being looked after by our team, chasing up test results and planning their care. Then we'll do another round with a senior consultant who is ultimately responsible for the direction of their care. By the end of the day we'll have communicated back to the patients how things are going with them.

"When you're an intern or resident you do five rotations a year in different hospital departments, to get a picture of all of the different areas of medicine."

"There are great rewards"

"I enjoy meeting and talking to patients, figuring out what's wrong with them and helping them to get better."

"It can be sad sometimes"

"Sometimes you can't make people better, and they die, and that's horrible."

CAREERS IN HEALTH:

You could become a:

Surgeon (www.racs.edu.au)

Doctor (www.ama.com.au)

Nurse (www.anf.org.au or

www.anci.org.au)

Dietitian (www.daa.asn.au)

Physio (www.physiotherapy.asn.au)

Speech Pathologist (www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au).

Most careers in health require years of training, usually at university. For more information about what training is required in each state and to find out about more careers in the health industry, check out www.myfuture.edu.au or www.jobguide.dest.gov.au