

A Career in Surgery

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| [general surgery](#), [onthepods](#)

A career in surgery can be both exceptionally rewarding and challenging.

Dr David Coker talks to Dr Titus Kwok about his experience as a surgeon and some tips when considering a career in surgery.

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Interviewee: Titus Kwok

About Dr Titus Kwok

Titus Kwok is the surgeon-in-charge at the University of Liverpool and completed his residency at Liverpool in 2010 as a PreSET SR. He is currently completing his training in the UK that are [interested in](#) that exists in Surgery.

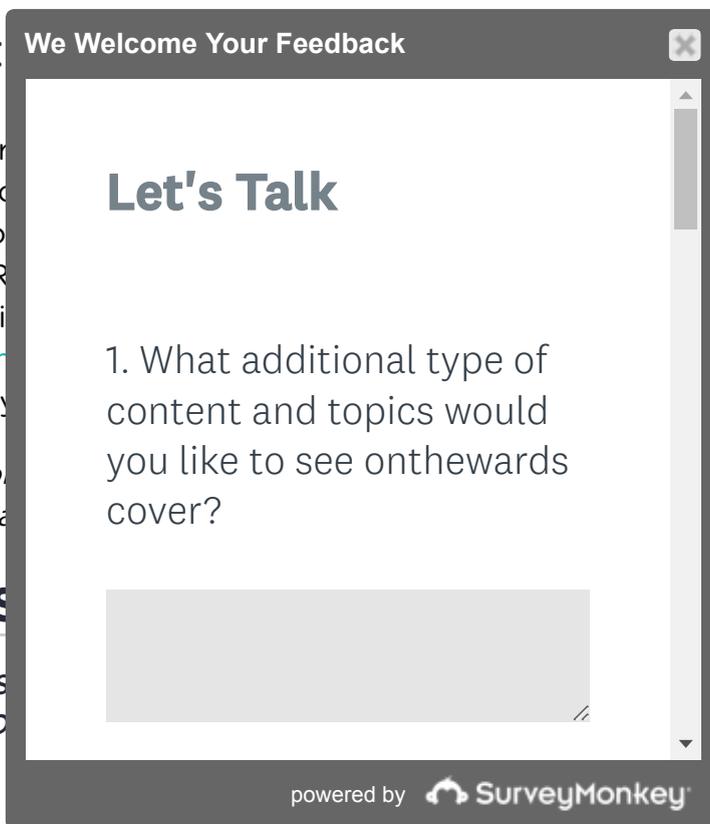
**This podcast was recorded at the University of Liverpool Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Unit.*

A Career in Surgery

With Dr Titus Kwok, SRMC, and Dr David Coker, Surgical SRMC.

Introduction

A career in surgery can be both exceptionally rewarding and challenging. Dr Titus Kwok talks to us about his experience as a surgeon, the rewards and difficulties in surgical training, and tips for those who are considering a career in surgery.



hospital*. He graduated from the University of Liverpool in 2010 and completed his internship and residency at the University of Liverpool Hospital Network in 2011. He is currently completing his training in the UK, and is a junior colleague of mentorship.

is now a consultant at the University of South Wales.

hospital and Dr David



1. Why choose surgery as a career? How can you tell if surgery is right for you?

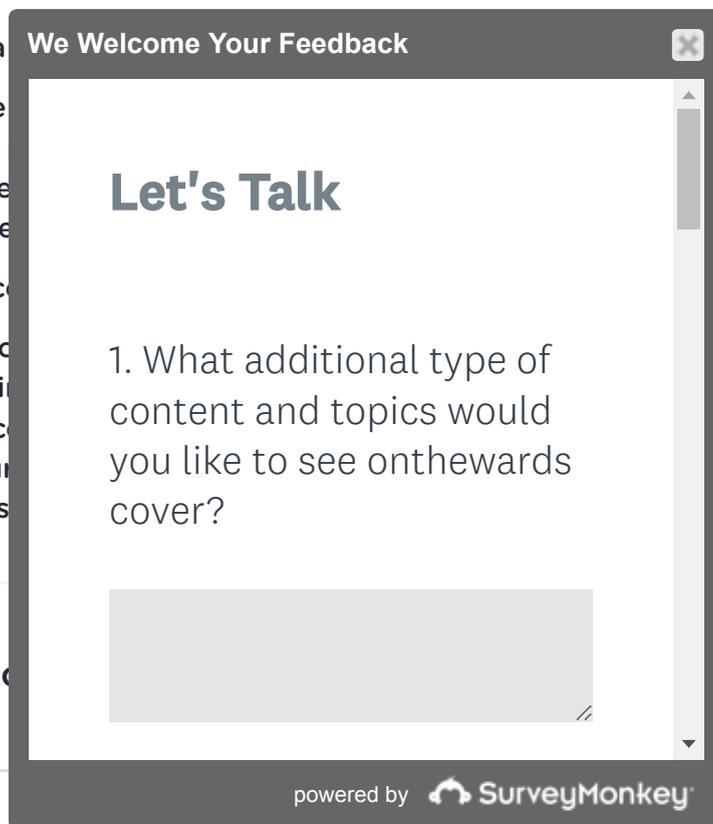
- Depends on the individual - there's always a specialty that will suit you in medicine
- Test out a few different things to find what suits you
- Get exposure:
 - Speak to surgical registrars in your field of interest

- Go to theatres whenever you can
- Consider staying back late for more exposure if needed

2. What are the challenges in surgical training?

- Surgical training is about transforming someone into a safe and proficient surgeon to provide the highest standard of care
- Challenges on a hospital level:
 - Resource distribution
 - Allocation of trainees to provide adequate numbers of trainees and experience for trainees

- Challenges on a national level:
 - Prepare for the future of surgery in line with current trends
 - May need to change the way we train that due to changes in the way we work
- Challenges on a specialty level:
 - Metropolitan vs rural
 - Increasingly evidence based training need for services



3. How can we overcome these challenges?

- Some challenges may not be able to be overcome- in which case, go with the flow
- For those challenges that can be overcome:
 - Become a better organiser and planner. Gather more information about what lies ahead, to help plan your activities. For example, look up the cases on the theatre lists ahead, read up and learn prior to the case - this may improve learning efficiency
 - Maintain level of training for competency
 - Maintain good collegial relationship with fellow trainees - it will help you down the road

4. What are the best aspects of a career in surgery?

- The journey with your patient is the most rewarding
- Being involved in the care of your patients
- Feeling humbled by the amount of trust and confidence they put in you
- Synthesise information and apply knowledge
- Operating – satisfying outcomes and fascinating anatomy
- Delivering good news once operation is done

5. What are the qualities that make a good surgeon?

- The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has 9 criteria for what makes a competent surgeon

- Collaborative
- Communicative
- Health and safety
- Judgement
- Management
- Medical
- Professional
- Technical

- Personal qualities

- Being a team player
- Being self-motivated
- Developing a hobby or interest

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... a hobby or

6. What

... feedback with you?

- Advice received during surgical training by a senior surgeon - “You are about to embark on a highly trained and disciplined profession that matters the life and death of a patient. Always be ready and be careful about each decision you make.” This advice helps me to put the patient first in any circumstance

7. Advice for aspiring surgeons

- Listen to yourself carefully about what you want to do

- Only those who are most passionate and committed to surgery will stay and do well
- Surgery is a lifelong apprenticeship that evolves with you as you get older
- Maintain passion and stay motivated
- Need to adopt surgeon's lifestyle
 - Need to be ready and standing by for your patient, may mean missing weekends
- Familiarise yourself with the process of application e.g. visit the RACS website, talk to registrars, go to career nights
- Pick a specialty you are really interested in and spend a good amount of time in it to test it out
- Choose a specialty carefully - Keep in mind that it takes time to change career direction e.g. switching from plastics to colorectal surgery
- Building CVs
 - Shape your CV to show something
 - Your CV should be committed towards
 - Ask around
 - Research a topic as
 - Referees and work

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