

Dr Farid Shaba



I graduated from medical school in Baghdad, Iraq, and after working in Baghdad and then Jordan for 11 years, I arrived in New Zealand in 2001.

Initially I worked in New Zealand as an interpreter for handicapped people who spoke only Arabic, Kurdish or Assyrian languages. I passed the USMLE exam Step 2 and then Step 1 and the English examination to be eligible for the NZREX clinical exam. While preparing for NZREX clinic exam I did a post-graduate diploma and then a Masters in Travel Medicine through Otago University.

I started working as a doctor in New Zealand in 2007 and it was like dream come true. I joined a programme run by ADHB's Clinical Education and Training Unit called the International Medical Graduate Ready for Work programme. It was a very useful and great programme, through which I learned a lot about New Zealand medical system. In 2009 I became a medical registrar and began to study for the physician specialty examination while working full time. I finished my house officer job in 2009 and became a medical registrar and started to study for the General Medicine specialty while working full time. I passed the written and clinical exam for FRACP and then applied for dual training in General Medicine and Infectious Diseases.

The Infectious Disease Training Programme is very competitive to get on and takes only one trainee a year. However, I was given a very good job as a Senior Medical Officer at Middlemore hospital, which I have been in for a year now. I do general medicine ward work, haematology and cardiology clinics as well as psychiatry medical reviews with psychiatry patients. I also do a lot of teaching with overseas-trained doctors who are preparing for the NZREX exam, as well as teaching house officers, registrars and medical students.

For me, working in New Zealand has been great experience. Auckland City Hospital and Middlemore Hospital are amazing hospitals to work in. But each hospital is different – in cultural experiences as well as everything else.