

Dr Victor Birioukov

Victor trained at medical school in Russia, and came to New Zealand in 2002. He is now a 2nd year trainee in the Auckland Anaesthesia Training Scheme run by the Australasian College of Anaesthetics. In this scheme, he works under the supervision of specialists, and must pass college exams. On successful completion of the five year programme he will become a specialist consultant anaesthetist.

Victor describes himself as always interested in this specialty. However he faced barriers on arrival in New Zealand. He couldn't speak English, *"language is always a problem"*. He spent three months in an English language programme, and did his own study while preparing for his NZ registration, practicing every day. Victor describes himself as fortunate in gaining two jobs, first with a medical software support company, and then as an anaesthetic technician at a local hospital.

These jobs provided work that connected with his field, improved his language and gave him the opportunity to develop networks within the medical community. *"Once you are in the hospital, you have a chance to demonstrate what you can do, and gain the confidence of other people. Getting the job as an anaesthetic technician was important, as I didn't have any practical experience, and it confirmed my desire to become a specialist."*

Victor says getting the job was important, but most important was getting onto a training scheme.

His advice to other IMGs is to *'get their exam as soon as possible, and get into the system early. I never doubted I needed to do it as soon as possible.* He says age is an important factor. *"Come when you are young, at 25 years old, you have a good chance, at 45, it is not so good."*

Victor also recommends to *"learn the system, get to know people. The bottom line is that people should like you, and feel confident working with you."*