



Dr Cathy Head

I am joint clinical lead of the Adult Congenital Heart Disease (ACHD) service and lead cardiologist for heart disease in pregnancy at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital. My typical week involves one or more ACHD clinics, a multidisciplinary cardiac obstetric clinic (congenital and acquired cardiac disease), care of ACHD medical and surgical inpatients, outpatient and/or intraoperative TOE and a multidisciplinary meeting. We also provide ACHD services to our congenital network, working with cardiology colleagues in the South East. This entails on average one full day joint clinic a month in a linked hospital and close communication, advice and review of imaging in between.

ACHD is a multidisciplinary team speciality which allows the development of long term relationships with a well defined group of patients. Within the medical team we each have a subspeciality interest in pregnancy, pulmonary hypertension, inherited aortopathy, imaging or intervention. As consultants in a relatively new speciality we are very involved in teaching and training, both in clinical practice and at training days and national meetings. There is also the opportunity to become involved in management of the service, and the future direction of services nationally, at an earlier stage in one's career than in more established specialities.

Since I was appointed in 2005 our service, in line with ACHD nationally, has expanded rapidly. I started my consultant career as a largely single handed full time ACHD cardiologist and currently (with two children aged four and two) work 6.5 PAs per week flexibly as part of the consultant team of three ACHD cardiologists and two combined ACHD/paediatric cardiologists.

I have described the working life of an ACHD specialist in a surgical centre, but an alternative career path is that of the consultant with an interest working outside a specialist centre as part of a congenital network. There is likely to be a significant expansion in these posts, allowing combined practice with general cardiology, heart failure, imaging etc and less geographical restriction than a specialist centre post.

If you are interested in ACHD I would be very happy to discuss further.