

Research Fellowship
Department of Fetal Medicine
Royal Prince Alfred Hospital
Sydney, Australia

The NFOG Fund generously supported part of my combined clinical and research stay in Australia from November 2011 to May 2012.

To summarize, I can warmly recommend a fellowship in Australia for Nordic doctors training in obstetrics and gynecology. The quality of the training is high with a strong tradition for evidenced based care. One may also get to experience the fairly large discrepancies between the public and private systems, and between the cities and the outback. And the country is of course amazingly beautiful and the people are very friendly.

The overall aim of my stay was to participate in a specific study on fetal heart function, but to reach that goal I needed to improve my scanning abilities significantly. In other words, the department in Sydney had to teach me quite a bit to get things running. Fortunately, the doctors were extremely patient and I slowly fitted into the role as a research fellow. The system at RPA is very well adapted to doctors training at many levels and the degree of supervision is tailored to the level you're at.

You need an Australian visa and authorization to work as a doctor in Australia. If you do not want to do the general exams all over (e.g. medicine, surgery, paediatrics etc.), the specialist track is the only choice. For that you need to be either a specialist or enter a specialist-training programme. The latter mandates that you have less than two year left of specialist training in your home country. Regardless, you need to pass an English exam, the IELTS test, which can be pretty demanding. All in all, it may take six months or more to get all the paper work done and it's a huge advantage to get help from your Australian host hospital.

The stay would have not been such a great experience without Jon, Ritu, Rajit, Neil etc. etc. and I'm grateful for all I've learned and experienced. We do hope to continue the collaboration with the department in Sydney.

Lars Henning Pedersen