

## Working as a vascular surgeon



"Vascular surgery is a truly exciting and challenging specialty. It involves interacting with a wide range of specialists, exercising sound judgment in many complex clinical situations and utilizing a wide range of technical skills to treat a number of different pathologies in every part of the human body."

Dr Carl Muthu, Vascular Surgeon  
Auckland District Health Board

### New Zealand vascular surgeons talk about the reality of working within this field

#### **Why did you choose vascular surgery and what do you like most?**

The specialty affords relative autonomy in diagnosis, multimodality treatment and follow up, allowing for the overall management of each case. The work is reconstructive and offers technical challenges. There are many appealing new technology opportunities.

#### **What strengths and abilities make a good vascular surgeon?**

It is essential that you should possess technical skill and aptitude for learning new procedures. Good judgement and the ability to cope under stress is important.

#### **What do you think are the future challenges of vascular surgery?**

Increasingly there is a trend towards integration of some areas more traditionally in the domain of interventional radiology (endovascular surgery). It remains unclear as to how this will be integrated into mainstream vascular surgery with the possibility that this could be a major part of practice.

#### **What advice would you give someone thinking about a career in vascular surgery?**

If you are interested in pursuing this field of work you should discuss the specialty with a local vascular surgeon.

#### **What are future opportunities in vascular surgery?**

Opportunities are significant - New Zealand is undersupplied, especially now that there are fewer surgeons undertaking combined training in general and vascular surgery.

#### **What is the work/life balance like?**

One specialist said that it is difficult to take time out since the training programme takes five years to complete and hours of work in the specialty are long.

Vascular surgery entails significant time commitments. An average working week would usually involve a minimum of 60 hours, so the impact on family life can be considerable.