



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics Specialty Advisory Committee

A meeting was held on Wednesday 15 March 2023 at 11:00am
hosted by the Royal College of Pathologists - Via MS Teams

Dr Lance Sandle
Registrar

- Present:** Dr David Turner, Chair
Dr Arthi Anand, Consultant Clinical Scientist, Deputy Chair
Dr Clare Collins, Trainee Representative
Prof Peter Johnston, Vice-President (Professionalism)
Mrs Deborah Pritchard, UK NEQAS for H&I Manager, Committee Member
- Apologies:** Dr Tracey Rees, Chair of Panel of Examiners
Dr Richard Battle, BSHI representative
Dr Anna Barker, Principal Clinical Scientist, Committee Member
- In attendance:** Fiona Addiscott, (Item 5.1 only)
Mahmood Mehtar, Senior Committees Officer
Shelaine Kissoon, Governance and Committee Services Officer

Minutes (unconfirmed)

Item 1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1.1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and introduced new RCPATH joiner, Mahmood Mehtar, who started recently in the vacant role of senior committees officer. Brief introductions were made.

1.2 Apologies for absence and attendance

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Rees, Dr Battle who had recently taken paternity leave and Dr Barker.

1.3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest that related to the matters discussed at the meeting.

Prof Johnston wanted to pass on for the record his thanks for the work and support provided by Alison Morgan who has recently left RCPATH to take up a role elsewhere.

Item 2 Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022.

Previous meeting minutes accepted without amendments

2.2

Action Log:

Item no HI.11/21c.

Co badging and document submission process.

Dr Arthi Anand reported that the Coeliac guidelines have been written and agreed by the authors and circulated to BSHI. Deborah Pritchard working on agreed amendments.

The Gastroenterology team at Chelsea & Westminster been reviewing/road testing. As the proposals went to a large group, it took some time to make its journey.

Deborah could advise on timeframe for reworking of the guidelines.

HLA antibody guidelines - Richard Battle been working with BSHI team, will go to consultation soon.

Arthi advised there had been some delay as BTS group wanted to align format to other related documents for a unified approach.

Gamze Sen in the Professional Practice area of RCPATH can look at this.

Prof. Johnston of RCPATH agreed and said we try to co-badge as much as possible for efficiency.

Arthi mentioned that HSCT audit template being measured against the guidelines gave clinical teams reassurance that labs had carried out quality assurance.

She also brought for consideration if the templates formatting and usability can be reviewed, as the documents are impossible to format/shape as she would like.

Peter: The publications team at RCPATH most likely can review if templates need reviewing.

Action: for Arthi to contact the Gamze/Cynthia at RCPATH publications team re audit template. – Done, approach made.

Keep action open

Item number HI. 12/21a

H&I training resources. Sarah Peacock as Chair of the BSHI BEB and Dr Turner have started formatting the NHS Learning Hub Pathology Portal. Chair screen shared some pages to attendees and advised that it's been live for about a year. Access is via RCPATH.

Chair asked us to consider how best we can take this initiative forward with our BSHI colleagues, so ensure as clinicians we post to the portal effectively and in uniform manner.

Arthi asked if the portal is for open access and can be shared with professionals outside of RCPATH. Chair understands that access can be shared to non RCPATH members, once we add to and populate the portal to enhance it. Luke Throver, Pathology Portal Officer at RCPATH has been supporting with this.

Chair suggested that a sub-group could be assigned to organise and deliver content. Luke could be approached to help coordination. Prof Johnston suggested that Jo Martin of RCPATH be looped in as editorial input. Arthi suggested that consideration of having some form of a points/credit system for users contributing to the portal could be very beneficial.

Prof Johnston offered that having good practice examples of safety/case studies would also be beneficial for RCPATH's safety bulletin. Maria Marrero maintains publication to the RCPATH website for this area.

Arthi suggested for consideration themes of leadership management, neurodiversity and wellbeing as some headings for portal content.

Action: Chair to contact senior H&I colleagues to source safety related material that can be used for the RCPATH safety bulletin.

Action: Bone marrow audit should have been approved. Arthi/Chair will check in liaison with Mahmood.

Deborah Pritchard joined the meeting at 11.38

GIRFT reporting – Arthi said that repeat testing and what we are doing around this was asked recently at a forum. Steps to minimise occurrences are in place, not a major issue in our specialty though and mention that Wales not really affected.

Patients needing immediate interventions. - There is funding in England for research with room for local ownership and interventions. Disenchantment in

small labs can happen due to limited autonomy and this project may show some potential solutions.

Arthi came across a good graph showing no vacant posts and error rates. Several HSST posts been filled and been moved out of London as part of the overall levelling up agenda.

Members observed that money has been made available and put into clinical science in England, however Scotland had struggled in this field with far less budget allocation for trainee clinical scientists for 2023 intake.

Determination of uncertainty document – carry forward.

Sustainability – an article is planned for the bulletin, Arthi will progress. Arthi can rework for consideration a recent article on On-call and deceased donors, it's a narrative case study rather than repeat of an article.

Action: Arthi will get approval from IBMS to use the article as a piece for the bulletin. Mahmood to list as a new action and remove the previous one.

Other relevant matters:

Firewall issues – Prof Johnston reported back on some findings whereby test reach servers had struggled to cope with the amount of data being channelled. Part 1 test reach exams had been particularly affected. The preference and trend for holding online exams rather than face to face continues. There is an awareness of the issue and mitigations have been in place. Arthi said that stress had understandably been caused to candidates and perhaps RCPATH could circulate a brief note to reassure that the issue is being resolved.

Prof Johnston advised one step has been offering candidates the opportunity to re-sit exams within days of technical issues happening that are beyond their control – rather than needing to wait several months. There was acknowledgement that factors such as junior doctors' and transport network strikes can have knock on effects we can't control.

Action: Article for BSHI.

In the absence of Dr Rees, the Chair will follow up on whether an article on examinations for the BSHI newsletter had been prepared. Action to remain open.

Not in textbook online event - Dr Anand attended and she will look to share the material. She will liaise with the relevant trainee representative. She suggested it may be worth checking the RCPATH website she suggested to see if on there.

(**Update:** Mahmood had a look and couldn't locate this, he will speak with Arthi and publishing colleagues further at RCPATH)

Updated workplan - Chair screen shared for all to view.

Prof Johnston confirmed that RCPATH has a safety strategy on website which needs updating.

Fiona Addiscott of RCPATH workforce strategy said that surveys amongst specialities have been held, however H&I had not been covered yet. A survey went out yesterday to clinical directors, asking them to cascade it further.

Fiona can share a link to it at the RCPATH's website. Chair had provided some data that supported and the deadline for completion is 14 April. The survey will repeat annually and questions can be amended. We will be benchmarking against kindred organisations, a factsheet with infographics will be produced.

Prof Johnston reported that Workforce data and safety issues link well. An upgrade project on IT systems to include CRM and membership data is taking place, as a 2-3 year project.

Deborah Pritchard advised that resource had been put into ESR work in Wales during the last couple of years including healthcare science data coding with graphs and demographic splits for all specialities. In Scotland there's an annual survey covering all disciplines. Chair commented that he had never been asked to take part in such a survey from his recollection. Prof Johnston offered to follow up with Chair.

Fiona asked if the Wales ESR data is publicly available. **Deborah will check and pass on contact details – Done.**
Arthi can also put Fiona in touch with a lead scientist to discuss further

Chair commented that this package of work being done on data collation can serve as a good iterative process.

Prof. Johnston agreed that if survey respondents have the lens of 'what can the RCPATH do for me', responses will give us a good marker as to the current issues and state of play in the speciality concerned. Granularity will obviously depend on the total number of returns from the areas approached. He appreciated this is a different approach by the relevant RCPATH team and thanked Fiona.

Fiona Addiscott left the meeting at 12.41.

Members pivoted back to discuss workplan matters:

Chair of Exams update – No specific update received prior to this meeting. There was mention that good practice is to ensure that IT connections are tested for reliability and speed prior to exams. Candidates taking exams are

being offered the option of the exam centre providing a trusted device or for the candidate to bring their own.

Arthi made mention of the TV channel, Transplant TV. There is opportunity for trainees and experienced clinicians to be able to post content onto there. Chair agreed we can discuss further the opportunities available here. All BTS educational resources will go on Transplant TV

Action: Peter to liaise with IT specialists at RCPATH further on firewall and outstanding accessibility issues

Governance

3.1

To review the workplan and discuss whether any updates are required.
Done.

4.

Patient Safety

4.1

To discuss key or evolving areas of risk for the specialty and recommendations for action. To note any patient safety incidents and the template to be used when submitting case studies for the College's Patient Safety Bulletin.

None raised

5.

Workforce

5.1

To receive an update from Fiona Addiscott, Workforce and Engagement Manager on the Workforce Intelligence Review

Done under item 2.2

5.2

BSHI workforce survey (survey closed 14 April 2022)

No update

6.

Examinations and Training

6.1

To receive an update on examinations from the Chair of Examiners

No report received for this meeting

6.2

To receive a report from the trainee representative Dr Clare Collins. Autumn study groups

Pathology portal group will be created

7. HSST Report

7.1

To receive a written update on HSST activities from the Chair of the BSHI Education Board (BEB)

A very brief outline was received in advance of this meeting. Some annual figures provided and this has taken off well as an option for higher training.

There was an observation that there could be scenarios where we have a large pool of qualified candidates and not full complement of available vacancies, even though some vacancies will naturally arise due to retirement.

Prof Johnston observed that he had heard similar sentiment before but had often seen that with forward planning we could pull levers to fill posts for identified needs. Chair wondered if BSHI and the workforce engagement work could align here. A 5-year training cycle could be beneficial which would take suitable forward planning.

Deborah wondered whether the national school of training track candidates' career paths and trajectories upon completion of their training. Do they remain in the NHS for example or enter other sectors and if any trends point to particular posts.

Clare had advised that recently post training, 4 candidates had exited, 1 of those leaving the field.

Action: Dr Paul Wright, chair of TDE could advise further. Chair will approach him and ask how we track HSST graduates.

8.

British Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (BSHI)

8.1

To receive a written update from Dr Richard Battle, BSHI representative

Antibody guidelines and others (Coeliac) will be published soon for consultation

Co-badging plans continue.

A head of lab email group may be set up shortly.

New BSHI chair starting later this year.

Prof Johnston needed to leave the meeting at 12:58

9.

Other College Committees

9.1

To note the minutes of the Transfusion Medicine SAC held on 2 November 2022. Two previous minutes from that SAC we have reviewed.

MHRA related IVDR (In Vitro Diagnostic Regulation) pushed to next year, was planned for Spring this year.

Half bead kits, many H&I colleagues not had aware of. Chair and others awaiting MHRA guidance on this.

Arthi had seen an email about deferrals and working groups that may look at this. She suggested for consideration for us to insert ourselves into the conversations.

Potential increase in charges for anti-body testing - Review pushed back to next year. Health institute exemptions may be considered. Chair and others agree that either charges may need to rise or testing levels decrease.

Deborah raised full bead testing and that more finance is being made available for this in Wales. UKAS may be involved but they may not have the capacity to do inspections. New UKAS standards may arrive in near future.

Richard Battle is involved in local discussions and with the PAG group also.

Action: Chair will liaise further with Richard of BSHI and on further MHRA liaison re IVDR.

Committee to keep IVDR and MHRA as standing agenda items.

BTS council guidelines – some funding is available to write guidelines, including managing highly sensitised patients and delisting. Some of this beyond our remit however and would need to link to other fields, such as anti-body. This committee can look at delisting in near future as capacity allows.

10.

College Bulletin, Press and PR, Updating of College Documents

10.1

To note any relevant articles published in The Bulletin and discuss ideas for new articles, and any issues which appear in the press that could be useful for the College's media work.

Staffing out of hours and donor testing material to be worked on.

10.2

To discuss best practice recommendations currently being updated, and ones that require updating.

2-3 pieces of work are in progress with this committee

11.

Academic Activities, Public Engagement, SAC Webpage

A higher training meeting due to take place via BSHI in May.

Digital BSHI SIG taking place in May.

EFI and BSHI conferences upcoming shortly.

11.1

To receive a verbal update on any symposiums/conferences of interest and to consider any academic activities that the SAC could organise for the College.

A H&I focus day could potentially be held once a suitable programme and time can be gauged.

11.2

To discuss whether any updates are required to the SAC web page on the College website.

<https://www.rcpath.org/profession/committees/histocompatibility-immunogenetics.html>

Action: Tracey listed as Committee member, should be amended to list as chair of exams committee.

No other changes raised.

12.

Environmental Sustainability

There was mention that a BSHI Newsletter article featured in November 2022 was beneficial, around cleaning of tips. Funding was not secured to take project further unfortunately.

Chair recently sent examples to RCPATH and asked members to continue to provide other thoughts for this item for future meetings.

12.1

The SAC is invited to consider the following to help the College develop its sustainability strategy (available at: <https://www.rcpath.org/about-the-college/governance/college-policies/environmental-policy.html>):

- Current practices in the lab that are aimed at reducing consumption or improving sustainability
 - No new matters to report.

13.

Any Other Business

No other business raised.

13.1

Feedback on meeting effectiveness and facilities.

None raised.

14.

Dates of Future Meetings

Wednesday 27 September 2023, 11am.

Meeting ended at 13:17.

