



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

RCPATH President's newsletter – November 2023



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President's Message

This is my last newsletter as I handover the presidency to Dr Bernie Croal on 16 November at our AGM. It has been a huge pleasure and a tremendous honour to have been lucky enough to be your president. Thank you for giving me that fantastic opportunity. I would encourage you all to take up one of the many positions the College offers. You will not regret it.

I would like to thank all the staff of the College and everyone who works so hard in a myriad of roles, be that as honorary officers, council members, examiners, authors or committee members to mention just a few; the College could not function without you.

I would also like to thank you all, our members, for supporting the College with your membership. Without you, your College could not exist.

NHS England Histopathology Transformation

We all know the vital role all our pathology specialties play in relation to patient diagnosis and treatment but that this role has often not been fully recognised.

On 14 November, the College hosted the launch of the NHSE England Histopathology Transformation and Recovery programme which is an ambitious project to try and provide a framework for improvement in

Histopathology, a specialty which is in particular need of support at the present time.

The conference brought together senior leaders and decision makers from NHSE, Pathology Networks, Cancer Alliances, Professional Bodies and Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to explore the scale of the challenge, the effect on clinical pathways and what action can be taken.

I welcome the opportunity this programme offers histopathology. I also understand the challenges – there were many insights offered and tough questions asked. We will be sending out further updates on what was discussed, next steps and what the programme will mean for members, in due course.

International Liaison of Pathology Presidents (ILPP) meeting

One of the privileges of being the president of a medical royal college is the opportunity to meet and network with peers and colleagues from across the UK and internationally.

I was delighted to attend the recent ILPP meeting in Hong Kong with colleagues from around the world, where we shared ideas on how to improve pathology services for patients worldwide.

International Pathology Day (IPD)

I was also delighted to chair this year's IPD, sponsored by the [British Society for Haematology](#) and [The Pathologist](#). This year's theme focused on the impact of climate change on disease and what can be done to tackle the challenges with key-note speaker Professor Virginia Murray, Head of Global Disaster Risk Reduction UK Health Security Agency.

Influencing parliamentarians – College visit to No. 10

President Elect Dr Bernie Croal and Royal College of Radiologists President (RCR), Dr Kath Halliday, jointly chaired a meeting on *Embracing the role of AI to support the medical workforce in early diagnosis* at 10

Downing Street. Steve Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health, saw presentations by Professor Darren Treanor on *Digital pathology and AI* and Dr Ellie Dow on *The Potential of AI-driven Blood Sciences Algorithms*. Representatives from the RCR also presented.

This was a good opportunity for us to influence policy at the highest level by stressing the vital importance of pathology in healthcare. It was an initial meeting that will form part of an on-going dialogue with government about the potential of IT and AI in healthcare.

Engaging stakeholders

- I was delighted to visit the beautiful new [Astra Zeneca campus in Cambridge, with Vice President for Communications, Professor Sarah Coupland](#), to meet Professor Paul Waring and Dr Luiza Moore. They spoke about translational pathology and its role in clinical trials and personalised medicine.
- It was also a great opportunity to listen to the College's Professor Louise Jones give a keynote lecture at the [Illumina Clinical User Group](#) symposium followed by a fascinating tour of the Illumina sequencing facility at Hinxtton.
- Our Scotland Regional Council met recently and agreed a response to the [Scottish Parliament Health, Social Care and Sport Committee consultation](#) on remote and rural healthcare. Action is needed to address workforce and develop digital pathology in remote areas to benefit patients.
- Professor Angharad Davies spoke at an Infection Management Coalition roundtable at the [King's Fund](#) annual conference, highlighting the need to invest in diagnostic services to support prescribing decisions. There were also discussions on better use of existing data and the importance of the patient voice.

Sky News interview

I was [interviewed on Sky News](#) about the announcement that the drug Anastrozole has been licensed as a preventative option for

breast cancer. It is very welcome news but I also stressed the importance of having a well-resourced pathology workforce to provide early and timely diagnosis for other suspected cancer cases.

College elections and appointments

I am very pleased to be able to announce the results of the recently held elections for a number of key roles for the governing boards of the College. This represents a significant change in the personnel who form part of the leadership team alongside the incoming [President Dr Bernie Croal](#).

Honorary Officers and Trustee appointments

Vice Presidents

- Dr Laszlo Igali
- Dr Noha El Sakka
- Professor Marta Cohen

Registrar

- Professor Sarah Coupland

College Council

- Regional Representative, North of England – Alex Haragan

And finally...

You can read more about my time as President in the [October Bulletin](#).

All that is left for me to say is that I wish my successor Bernie and everyone at the College all the very best for the future.

Thank you.

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A PDF version of this e-newsletter is available at
[RCPATH newsletters](#)

Working for members

UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations now hosted on the College website

The College website is the new home of the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs).

Working with the Standards Unit at the UK Health Security Agency and UK SMI Steering Committee, we have migrated the UK SMI documents from the www.gov.uk website to the College website. The new webpages have been designed to be user friendly, easy to navigate and functional. They also provide printable UK SMI documents in a PDF format. For more information [visit the UK UK SMIs webpage](#)

Joint statement with the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) on developing the role of scientists in histopathology reporting

Biomedical scientist reporting of abnormal cervical cytology screening cases has been accepted practice for 20 years.

This has been followed by the biomedical scientist reporting of selected ophthalmic pathology samples and malignant non-gynaecological cytology. A more recent development is the extension of training to include the histopathological reporting of cases from pre-determined body systems (gynaecological and gastrointestinal tracts and skin). Since the introduction of the joint RCPATH and IBMS histopathology reporting qualification in 2016, 16 biomedical scientists have successfully completed its rigorous training course and 72 more are in various stages of training and are expected to qualify over the next 4 years. The College published an updated joint statement with the [IBMS](#) to reflect these developments, which you can view [here](#).

CPD web-refresh and your 2022/2023 CPD return

We've been reorganising the CPD webpages on the member's website. Please do take a look [here](#)! If you have any suggestions for how we might improve these further, please get in touch at mycollege@rcpath.org.

The College offers a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) portfolio service where you can record and 'return' your CPD activities and track your overall participation. We encourage members to record their CPD activities as they undertake them and to complete their CPD returns by 30 September each year.

Although the recommended deadline has passed for 2022/2023, you can still make a submission. Please visit www.rcpath.org and click on 'Log in to MyRCPath' at the top of the screen. Once you have logged in, select 'Access the CPD portfolio' on the right of your screen to review your records.

If you have any questions regarding submitting your CPD return, please contact the Member Engagement and Support team on 020 7451 6720 or drop us an email at cpd@rcpath.org.

Launch of the technical EQA Governance framework (Workstreams 1 and 2)

We are excited to announce the successful completion of EQA Workstreams 1 and 2, advancing governance around technical external quality assurance (EQA) and its performance. Workstream 1 established a robust governance and assurance framework, ensuring transparency and accountability in EQA processes, while Workstream 2 has implemented a consistent and effective approach to identifying and addressing poor performance, elevating EQA standards. For more info and access to documents, visit our [news page](#).

Educational Update 2023 meeting

This annual meeting will be held remotely on Friday 24 November 2023 from 10:00am to 12:00pm. This year's theme is on the 2023 Workforce Plan. The keynote speaker will be Dr Bernie Croal, President-Elect. His talk will include how the workforce plan may relate to training, education and pathology services in the future.

The meeting will also provide an educational update on training and assessment and examinations. There will be an update on the Pathology Portal as it celebrates its first year.

This meeting is relevant to all those involved in the delivery of pathology training – including trainers, assessors and senior trainees preparing to become consultants. The programme and how to book your free place on the [College website](#).

The Pathology Portal

The Pathology Portal has continued to grow with 4,700 resources accessed over 85,000 times. The resources include a variety of cases, videos, podcasts, quizzes for assessing learning and other educational materials. The resources cater to the professional development needs of pathologists worldwide, with the userbase of the Pathology Portal reaching more than 2,000 users.

A follow up survey to assess the use of learning resources in Pathology has been conducted, a similar survey was conducted prior to the launch of the Pathology Portal and this survey will gauge the differences between then and now. The results are currently being analysed and the data will be aggregated to help tailor learning and support on the Pathology Portal to learners needs.

We appreciate your continued support and encourage you to provide feedback on your experience with the Pathology Portal. If you have any questions, suggestions, or believe you have content suitable for the platform, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at pathologyportal@rcpath.org.

Download your ePortfolio training items from the old LEPT system

College members who used the old LEPT system during their training are invited to download all their training items to their own device. This must be done by 15 December 2023.

Following the above date, the old LEPT system will cease to exist and all content will be irretrievably deleted.

If you would like to request access to the old LEPT system to download your ePortfolio, please contact the LEPT team at leptdownload@rcpath.org.

Those members who used the old LEPT system as part of their training will belong to one of the below following specialties:

- chemical pathology
- diagnostic neuropathology
- forensic histopathology
- histopathology
- medical microbiology
- oral maxillofacial pathology training
- paediatric and perinatal pathology
- medical virology.

Existing trainees who are continuing training using the new LEPT system do not need to download their training items from the old LEPT system. This is because their training items are in the process of being migrated across to the new LEPT system, from which they can be downloaded anytime.

Percy Oliver Memorial Award 2023 winner

The College is delighted to announce that the winner of the Percy Oliver Memorial Award 2023 (Transfusion Medicine Nursing Category) is Joanne Tossell for her outstanding contribution to blood transfusion medicine.

The standard of applications was extremely high this year and, after much deliberation, the panel awarded the prize to Joanne who will be presented with her award at the [BBTS Conference](#) held in October 2023. Please [visit the website](#) to find out more.

Get involved at the College

Apply to be a CESR Assessor

If you are interested in becoming involved with the College, becoming a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) assessor is a good way to do so. The role of a CESR assessor is to determine whether or not each CESR applicant meets the standard for their specialty and either recommend applicants for entry to the Specialist Register or outline what more needs to be done to meet the standard. Training and ongoing support will be provided and CESR assessors can self-accredit for CPD points for each CESR evaluation they undertake.

A role description and further information are available on the [College website](#). If you would like to apply, please send an email outlining how you meet the person specification, along with an abbreviated CV, to training@rcpath.org.

International

We will be at Medlab Middle East 2024

As a supporting body of Medlab Middle East, we are excited to announce that from Monday 5 to Thursday 8 February 2024, President-Elect Dr Bernie Croal will attend the congress. He will deliver a

keynote talk on the *Appropriate utilisation of laboratory testing – strategies to ensure lab testing is focused and safe*. Furthermore, College Fellows Dr Karin Denton and Professor Walid Al-Wali will represent the College as speakers on the histopathology and microbiology tracks. You will also be able to visit us at the exhibition stand being hosted by the International Team. Find out more about the conference from the official [Medlab Middle East](#) website.

International webinar

The College, in partnership with the Egyptian Committee for Pathology Training and Shefa Al-Orman hospital, is delivering a webinar focusing on microbiology challenges in oncology practice within the UK and Egypt. If you would like to attend this webinar please [follow this link](#) for more information.

Regional News

New publications

October *Bulletin* out now

The [October Bulletin](#) reflects on the great challenges facing pathologists today and explores the ways the profession can move forward. This issue features articles on transfusion safety, antimicrobial resistance, workforce shortages, maternal blood screening and representing the interests of our members.

The issue features an [interview](#) with our incoming President, Dr Bernie Croal, as well as updates from the College's EDI Network. In his [final editorial](#), Professor Mike Osborn reflects on the last 3 years of his presidency. He particularly highlights the College's successes with influencing healthcare strategies in the devolved nations, developing the national antimicrobial resistance action plan and engaging with the concerns of our members.

National Medical Examiner's Good Practice Series

The [13th document](#) in this series explores the unique challenges posed by major incidents.

New clinical guidelines

- [Post-mortem examination of animals having received chemotherapeutic or radioactive agents.](#)
- [Dataset for histopathological reporting of vulval carcinomas.](#)

New guideline consultations

- [Guidelines on autopsy practice: Maternal death](#) (closes 20 November).
- [Dataset for the histopathological reporting of anal cancer](#) (abridged consultation closes 21 November).
- [Dataset for the histopathological reporting of mesothelioma](#) (closes 7 December).

New audits

- [An audit of quality of reporting of oral cavity resection specimens.](#)
- [An audit of histopathological reporting of carcinomas of the parathyroid.](#)

College courses

[How I report inflammatory bowel disease \(IBD\) biopsies – FREE WEBINAR](#)

12.30pm, Thursday 23 November 2023

CPD credits: 1

Biopsies for suspected or known inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are commonly encountered within routine histopathology practice. Histopathology plays a very important role in the management of patients with these conditions. This webinar will discuss the role of the histopathologist in this setting and will suggest a structured approach to the assessment of gastrointestinal mucosal biopsies derived from patients with known or suspected IBD.

This event will take place at 12.30pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Medical examiner training

The College is the [lead medical royal college for medical examiners](#) and provides training for any doctor wishing to work as a medical examiner. Participants will need to complete mandatory 26 e-learning modules and attend an entire face-to-face training day to receive a certificate of completion. The day includes short presentations, small group discussions of case scenarios and the opportunity to share experience. Medical examiner training is open only to medically qualified individuals who work in England and Wales.

New medical examiners who successfully complete the training and the e-learning modules will be invited to join the College as members.

[Medical examiner training – Virtual \(rcpath.org\)](#)

Wednesday 6 December 2023

CPD credits: 6

News from other organisations

2021–2022 UCL Medical School’s research project into the financial needs of medical students, doctors, and their families – report launched

2021-2022 UCL Medical School’s research team conducted a research project into the financial needs of medical students, doctors, and their families, funded by the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund. They have published a short report which includes the project’s key findings. You can find the [full report here](#).

Become a Question Writer

The Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians are seeking Question Writers specialised in molecular medicine, biochemistry, genetics, anatomy, physiology, immunology or statistics to write clinical science questions for our MRCP(UK) Part 1 Written Examinations. This is a valuable opportunity to contribute to the assessment of medical knowledge and play a vital role in shaping the future generation of physicians. Upon the completion of a half day online training course, this would then involve participating in an annual two-day Question Writing meeting at the University of Warwick in Coventry, offering excellent networking opportunities, external CPD and paid expenses. See how to apply [here](#).

Other external events of interest

08 November 2023

[Digital Pathology and AI showcase](#)

08–09 November 2023

[Infection 360](#)

09 November 2023

[UK Myeloma Society Autumn Day](#)

09 November 2023

[BSAC National OPAT Conference 2023](#)

10 November 2023

[ACB National Audit Day](#)

10 November 2023

[UK Lymphoma Trials Group](#)

Our full programme of CPD events can be found on the members' [website](#).

RCPATH CPD accredited online resources can be found at the following [link](#)