



The Royal College of **Pathologists**

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Veterinary Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee Newsletter

Autumn 2022

Despite the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the last 12 months have been very productive for the Veterinary Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC), which launched the online trainee registration system and finalised the new exam structure for the Veterinary Pathology FRCPATH exams. We also further developed the webpage and guidelines for examinations and saw growing participation in a number of activities, including the highly successful National Pathology Week and Diamond Jubilee celebrations, which included a talk on zoonoses, contributions to the Diamond Jubilee anniversary flyer, a [Pet Portrait Competition](#), a pathology quiz, [Bulletin articles](#) and Open Day events. We continued to champion veterinary pathology across a number of areas, including liaison with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, government and international colleges of pathology. The SAC have drafted a work plan for 2022–2023, which includes several activities to increase the profile of the FRCPATH exams and a review of the various curriculums.

Our committee continues to represent all areas of our profession and we are pleased to have welcomed Dr Marvin Firth (anatomic veterinary pathology trainee representative) to the Veterinary Pathology SAC. Sadly, we also said goodbye to Dr Jennifer Irving, Dr Guy Davies and Dr Kate Hughes, whom we thank for their huge contribution to the Veterinary Pathology SAC. The committee are seeking to recruit to a number of committee positions and interested individuals are encouraged to contact the Chair of the SAC.



Professor Roberto La Ragione FRCPath, Chair of the Veterinary Pathology SAC

Guidance notes – Post-mortem examination of animals having received chemotherapeutic or radioactive agents

This document has been prepared by the Veterinary Pathology SAC to provide veterinary pathologists, veterinary clinicians, veterinary nurses and ancillary staff guidance on safe practice when performing post-mortem examinations (PME) of animals that have been administered chemotherapeutic agents or radioactive agents prior to their death.

By their very nature, chemotherapeutic substances damage or kill cells. Their action is rarely specific to tumour cells and normal cells are often damaged or killed. These agents are being increasingly used in veterinary practice for therapeutic and diagnostic purposes where appropriate safety precautions are taken to protect staff and owners from the potential for negative impact on their health.

However, there is also a potential risk to those performing PMEs of animals that have undergone a procedure prior to death. Both cytotoxic drugs and radioactive agents can produce harm to those exposed to them, ranging from skin, eye and mucous membrane irritation and allergic reactions, through to more severe systemic tissue damage and carcinogenesis. There may also be negative impacts on fertility and pregnancy. Therefore, steps to protect the health and safety of all personnel are essential.

Veterinary pathology-focused *Bulletin* articles

The key role of veterinary pathology in public health

In this [article](#), SAC Chair Professor Roberto La Ragione explained the vital role of veterinary pathologists and microbiologists in developing a greater understanding of disease processes and treatments that not only help animals, but also humans. The health of humans and animals has always been interconnected. Veterinary pathologists and microbiologists play a vital role in developing a greater understanding of disease processes and treatments that not only help animals, but also humans.

The journey to a greener pathology laboratory

Reducing the environmental impact of pathology laboratories while maintaining high standards is a balancing act that requires further exploration. In this [article](#), we hear from the newly established British Society of Veterinary Pathologists (BSVP) Green Team about their work to improve sustainability in veterinary laboratories.

In 2021, the BSVP, inspired by the leadership shown by the Royal College of Pathologists, the NHS and Vet Sustain, formed the BSVP Green Team. The Green Team were tasked with exploring the challenges surrounding sustainability in veterinary pathology and how the veterinary pathology community might work together to improve sustainability. It was envisaged that the work of this group would include (but would not be limited to), the development of a webpage resource on sustainability within our profession for sharing experiences, promoting good practice and fostering links with other green groups (e.g. Vet Sustain).

Pathology Portal

The Royal College of Pathologists, together with Health Education England (HEE), have developed and continue to enhance an innovative adaptive learning platform to support trainees and practicing pathologists in digital learning — the Pathology Portal. Using technology to enhance learning, with interactive features, the platform aims to incorporate the ability to host a range of learning materials, including virtual microscopy whole slide imaging (WSI) over the internet to enable pathology tissue samples to be annotated and viewed as part of learning sets, mapped to the relevant curricula of the Royal College of Pathologists, and hosted and maintained within the system.

This platform has been designed to support not only digital morphological learning, but also to support clinical and macroscopic learning across all our disciplines, including veterinary pathology, for which a category has been created on the platform. Disciplines to go live so far include cytology, histopathology, neuropathology and autopsy pathology. A link to the project and information on how to get access can be found here: www.rcpath.org/profession/pathology-portal.html.

Online trainee registration system

Trainees in veterinary anatomic, veterinary clinical pathology and veterinary microbiology are encouraged to register as an RCPATH trainee. Trainees wishing to register should complete the registration form that can be found here:

<https://www.rcpath.org/trainees/training/register-as-a-veterinary-pathology-trainee.html>.

What are the benefits of registering as an RCPATH trainee?

The benefits of registration with the Royal College of Pathologists will include:

- a. full access to the relevant [curriculum](#)

- b. a welcome letter from the Chair of the Veterinary Pathology SAC
- c. information about the College's [Trainees' Advisory Committee](#) – the committee that represents trainees in the College
- d. access to 'MyRCPATH' including access to the members' handbook, draft consultations, Council and other College committee minutes and previous issues of the *Bulletin*. The members' handbook includes details of individual members but as a registered trainee your details will not be listed in the members' handbook.
- e. access to the quarterly [Bulletin](#) and all College mailings (including the monthly President's e-newsletter) for the duration of training
- f. notification of [College scientific meetings](#) at reduced rates
- g. [discounts on pathology titles](#) (behind member login)
- h. as a registered trainee of the RCPATH you are able to buy a [TOTUM PRO card](#), which offers discounts across a range of over 200 retailers
- i. access to a range of CPD events.

Any queries concerning the registration process should be directed to Adobea Akuffo, Training Co-ordinator, via training@rcpath.org.

RCPATH Veterinary Pathology School for trainees/residents

To help residents make the most of their training opportunities and to build the RCPATH veterinary pathology community, the RCPATH in collaboration with the Veterinary Pathology Group (VPG) have organised a fully funded one day online trainee school for all trainees/residents (17 January 2023). The main aim of the day is to provide general revision updates on a number of important topic areas covered in the respective curriculums, as well as providing guidance on the RCPATH exam structure and how best to prepare for the Part 1 and Part 2 examinations. The programme will consist of a series of short lectures delivered by experts, covering anatomic, clinical and microbiology topic areas.

You can register online here: www.rcpath.org/event/rcpath-veterinary-pathology-school-virtual-training.html

The RCPATH Veterinary Pathology School is aimed at veterinary pathology (anatomic and clinical) and microbiology residents at any stage of their training. Therefore, the emphasis

of the programme is on the FRCPATH programme, but those studying for ACVP, ECVCP, ECVM and ECVP exams may also find the programme of interest.

Pathology-related meetings

[European College of Veterinary Pathologists – Joint Congress of the ESVP/ECVP/ESVCP/ECVCP 2023](#)

[Microbiology Society – 2023 Annual Conference](#)

[European College of Veterinary Microbiology – 2023 Conference](#)

[British Society of Veterinary Pathology – upcoming events](#)

[British Society of Toxicological Pathology - upcoming events](#)

Exams update

This autumn, we experienced an unprecedented high number of registered examination candidates in veterinary pathology. There were 14 candidates in total, six sitting Part 2 and eight who sat Part 1. The range of subspecialties was also remarkably high this year with almost all available subspecialties represented (avian, laboratory animal, large domestic animal horse, large domestic animal pigs and small domestic animal). The examination format for Part 1 was similar to last year's, with no choice of questions offered. For further details regarding veterinary pathology examinations, please contact the Chair of the Panel of Examiners, Ronnie Chamanza.

Veterinary pathology quiz

On Friday 5 November 2021, as part of National Pathology Week, the College ran a virtual veterinary pathology 'pub quiz' for veterinary undergraduate students. Hosts Professor Roberto La Ragione and Dr Nicola Parry represented the three main areas in veterinary pathology and provided a range of thought-provoking and entertaining questions. The winning team received a £100 voucher. A second veterinary pathology quiz was run for the Diamond Jubilee on Friday 24 June 2022 and was hosted by Professor Roberto La Ragione and Dr Kate English.

Feedback or suggestions

If you have any feedback on this newsletter, or suggestions for items or College activities you wish to learn more about, please contact Alison Morgan, Governance and Committee Services Officer, at: alison.morgan@rcpath.org. Please title your email 'Vet Path News'.