



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

RCPATH President's newsletter – April 2024



President's Message

The importance of collaboration is now bigger than ever and there are many different levels that we can do this as a College and as individuals. Working with other Royal Colleges through the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges is hugely beneficial to the medical and scientific professions, as is collaborative working with other pathology based associations and societies. A much expanded Pathology Alliance has now emerged, with much more interaction and new sub-groups covering National Pathology Week, diagnostic stewardship and workforce being established.

The College last week begun a new collaborative venture with industry partners from areas such as diagnostics, pharmaceuticals and technology – all of which are clearly linked to pathology services. Collaborative working with industry in this way will allow research, innovation, implementation and educational projects and activities to flourish. To be clear, the College will of course not be in the business of selling or endorsing products directly but this interaction will allow sponsorship agreements to be considered that will benefit the College, our members and ultimately patient care. It is important that College members can influence appropriate product development, innovation and implementation to ensure pathology services are able to make as big an impact on healthcare outcomes as they possibly can and in a timely, accelerated manner.

The first Industry Leaders Forum took place on the 17 April this year and was attended by a large number of company representatives,



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many at CEO level, and many as fellows of this College. There was huge enthusiasm at the potential that future collaboration can deliver and we look forward to welcoming more corporate-level members and those that want to work jointly to allow pathology to flourish. You can read more about the [event here](#).

Internal College activity continues to focus on new strategy development and, of course, budgetary alignment. This is essential to ensure we spend much valued funds on the most important aspects of College work – serving the College, members, healthcare and, ultimately, patients as best as we can.

We are well into another exam season. Huge thanks to those who have chosen to sit College exams and, of course, for the hard work that goes into this – the best of luck to you all. Also, a huge thanks to the many hundreds of volunteers from our membership who step forward, largely in their own time, to construct, deliver and mark the many exams we provide every 6 months across our 17 disciplines.

We now look forward to another College business year, with a refreshed strategy and a new level of enthusiasm for collaborative working. There are, of course, huge challenges facing healthcare, but collectively we can make a huge impression to ensure that pathology services get the funding and the staff that we need so that we can make the important impact that we know will go a long way to improve the future of healthcare.

Pathology is healthcare and healthcare needs pathology...

Workforce data collection

In 2023, the College launched a new model of data collection, our most comprehensive and ambitious method to date. To anyone who filled in a survey or collaborated with us, we appreciate the valuable information shared and the insights gained. We understand that working within an already pressured environment means the time it takes to fill out lengthy surveys and censuses can be a challenge.

It was our ambition to publish our data in a pathology wide workforce report, the first of its kind for the College. However, because of low response rates, the data was not robust enough to allow us to paint an accurate picture of the pathology workforce across all the areas we had intended. We have reassessed and are instead building a series of specialty-specific factsheets highlighting current and future workforce issues. In addition, we are also building a new workforce strategy that seeks to provide timely and potent contributions to efforts aimed at ameliorating the workforce crisis that is facing pathology services.

Workforce data collection 2024

Robust data and intelligence for both workforce and workload is fundamental for evidence-based workforce planning. It has become apparent that workforce planning for pathology does not happen and has never happened. It is, therefore, more important than ever for the College to have the best possible insight it can on workforce and why future engagement with College surveys is so crucial.

The work we have undertaken over the last 18 months has moved us in the right direction. Our lessons learnt, relationships built and data collected will all support ongoing efforts to get pathology workforce issues to the forefront of decision-makers and policymakers' minds. Through this work, we aim to influence a better resourced and sustainable workforce, fit to deal with the workload challenges of the future.

It is our top priority in 2024 to refine and improve our approach to data collection that sees us gain accurate and insightful workforce data, that builds on our efforts throughout 2023. Work has already begun in this area by the Workforce team. Keep a look out for updates during the year about our progress.

RCPATH Foundation Fellowships

I am delighted to announce the 2024 Foundation Fellowship scheme. The College makes available 25 Foundation Fellowships annually. The scheme is open to Foundation doctors who secure a Foundation post in which they will rotate through a pathology

specialty between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025.

Foundation Fellows receive opportunities to get involved in a range of College activities, meetings, and events.

The closing date is Monday 8 July 2024. More information on the [College website](#).

If your department has placements for Foundation doctors, please encourage them to apply.

Parliamentary Engagement

The annual general meeting of the [APPG for Diagnostics](#), for which we are joint secretariat with the Royal College of Radiologists, took place in parliament in March. I gave a talk on the challenges facing pathology.

Along with Dr Kath Halliday, President of the Royal College of Radiologists, I attended a meeting with Greg Clark MP, Chair of the [Science Innovation & Technology Select Committee](#) to [discuss our recent report on AI in the NHS](#). Greg Clark was very interested in the potential of AI to make healthcare more efficient and welcomed any future work on the topic. I also took the opportunity to highlight the necessity of digital pathology, an increased medical and IT workforce, and modern IT systems, before AI can be successfully implemented and its benefits realised.

Consultations

The General Medical Council (GMC) has launched a consultation on the rules, standards and guidance by which it will regulate physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs).

The consultation, which runs until 20 May, also covers other areas of the GMC's oversight of PAs and AAs. These include:

- education and training
- registration
- fees
- dealing with concerns.

In addition, the consultation is also asking for views on draft principles to inform the content of fitness to practise decision-making guidance

that will, from the end of this year, apply to doctors as well as to PAs and AAs.

The College will be responding as an organisation and members can also respond as individuals via the [GMC's website](#).

Dr Bernie Croal
President, The Royal College of Pathologists
X: [@RCPath](#)

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A PDF version of this newsletter is available at
[RCPath newsletters](#)

Working for members

Publication of Death Certification Regulations and announcement of a statutory implementation date

[The College welcomes the publication of the regulations](#) relating to the reforms to death certification and the announcement that they will become statutory from 9 September this year. These reforms will affect everyone involved in the certification, review and registration of deaths. They will improve support for bereaved people and care for future patients. As the lead medical royal college for medical examiners, the Royal College of Pathologists welcomes the move of medical examiners to a statutory footing, with all deaths in England and Wales being either scrutinised by a medical examiner or investigated by a coroner.

Is your Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) panel review meeting looming?

A gentle reminder to trainees. If you have a looming ARCP panel review meeting, remember to ensure that your ePortfolio items have been completed well in advance in readiness for the review meeting. This includes the indicative number of supervised learning events and your MSF assessment, if appropriate. If you need ePortfolio assistance, please contact assessment@rcpath.org.

International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) haematolymphoid tumours publication

The IARC published the fifth edition of the [WHO Classification of Haematolymphoid Tumours](#) online.

CPD process

We are delighted to provide you with the [CPD portfolio service](#) at the College. This service enables you to record and monitor your CPD activities, and also allows you to download an annual CPD statement – a valuable resource for your appraisals.

Key points about our CPD process:

- CPD year: The College's CPD year runs from 1 April to 31 March of the following year
- recording activities: we encourage members to [record CPD activities](#) promptly as they undertake them
- CPD returns: please complete [your CPD return](#) for the 2023/2024 CPD year within 6 months following the CPD year end, by 30 September.

For any queries or assistance, please contact our member engagement and support team at cpd@rcpath.org.

[The Pathology Portal nominated for Health Service Journal Digital Award](#)

We are delighted to announce that the Pathology Portal has been shortlisted for Health Service Journal Digital Award. The aim of the awards is to recognise digital products, projects and services to transform healthcare delivery, enhance efficiency, and improve patient outcomes.

With the HSJ Digital Awards attracting over 300 entries in its first year, this is a fantastic achievement.

The Pathology Portal

The Pathology Portal offers an extensive collection of over 5,200 resources. These resources encompass diverse cases, informative videos, podcasts, quizzes and more, catering to the professional development needs of pathologists at various career stages.

The resources have been accessed over 130,000 times, with the Pathology Portal team continuing to reach out to new contributors for content and to address gaps, with new lectures being recorded for the Pathology Portal and libraries of whole slide images in progress.

The Pathology Portal has been presented at the [British Society of Haematology 2024 ASM](#) in Liverpool, as well as Professor Jo Martin giving a talk at the collaborative meeting for the National School of Healthcare Science.

More information and how to access available at [The Pathology Portal](#).

We value your ongoing support and invite you to share your feedback, questions, suggestions, or content with us at pathologyportal@rcpath.org.

Get involved in the College

Volunteer opportunities: National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel (NQAAP)

Are you interested in playing a key role in overseeing and monitoring the correct operation of External Quality Assessment (EQA) schemes in the specialties of medical microbiology or immunology?

The College is delighted to have just opened 2 leadership roles in the crucial work of EQA, which plays a pivotal role in patient safety and improving patients' experience of healthcare. Please see below for the full adverts for the chair of the immunology or medical microbiology NQAAPs.

The chair of each NQAAP is fundamental in ensuring patient safety is placed at the forefront and assuring the reliability of laboratory medicine. Each NQAAP has been established to provide a forum in which good practise and challenges are discussed, escalated and solved in an effective and efficient manner. If you have any questions about the application process or the work of the NQAAPs, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Maria Marrero-Feo, Professional Guidelines Manager, on maria.marrero-feo@rcpath.org.

We welcome applications from all backgrounds regardless of their disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion or socio-economic background. We look forward to hearing from you.

- [Medical Microbiology Chair Job Advert](#)
- [Immunology Chair Job Advert.](#)

International

A call for expressions of interest for international project – chemical pathology

We have an exciting opportunity for clinical scientists or doctors to deliver lectures for quarterly webinars, monthly case report sessions and to become involved in an international project to improve the quality of chemical pathology training and service provision in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. This has been made possible by successfully securing a grant under the [Tropical Health Education Trust Global Health Workforce Programme](#), funded by [The Department of Health and Social Care, UK](#). A small honorarium will be available for those who deliver activities. For more information and to express an interest in contributing please contact: international@rcpath.org.

Global Antimicrobial Resistance Webinar Series

From 5 June to 12 July, we are delivering a weekly global webinar series that will explore different topics of antimicrobial resistance and stewardship. Each webinar will start with a UK speaker introducing the topic and then there will be 2–3 international speakers providing the perspective from their respective countries. If you are interested in learning more, [please click this link](#).

Ghana lecture series 2

The Ghana lecture series 1 and 2 is a collection of 47 video lectures that include topics relating to chemical pathology, haematology, histopathology, microbiology and research. The project was a collaboration between the College and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and coordinated by The Tropical Health Education Trust (THET).

View the most recent titles on our [virtual resources page](#). Thank you to all fellows and those within our networks for supporting this project.

- To evaluate the laboratory investigation of the deceased patient.
- To evaluate laboratory investigation of the unconscious patient.
- My approach to kidney biopsies.
- Expanding research horizons: General research methodologies.
- Statistics in medicine.

New publications

New publications

- The [April Bulletin](#) explores the impact of climate change on global health and healthcare sustainability.
- [G005 BPR Excessive workload management in laboratory medicine: patient safety and professional practices.](#)
- [G165 Dataset for histopathological reporting of anal cancer.](#)
- [Dataset for the histopathological reporting of adrenal cortical carcinoma and pheochromocytoma/paraganglioma.](#)
- [National Medical Examiner's Good Practice Series 14: Palliative and end-of-life care.](#)

College Courses

[Gestational Trophoblastic Disease – Webinar 1](#)

1pm, Monday 13 May 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

This webinar series is coordinated by Professor Marta Cohen and has 2 presentations.

The genetics behind GTD

Summary: This presentation will describe the genetic constitution of molar pregnancies and how genetic and other related tests can inform the diagnosis of abnormal products of conception. It will outline how genetic testing, namely short tandem repeating genotyping, is informative for the diagnosis and management of gestational trophoblastic neoplasia.

Molar pregnancy

Summary: This talk will cover the key morphological features required for diagnosis of molar gestations. Common pitfalls and mimics such as villous dysmorphism and placental mesenchymal dysplasia shall also be discussed.

[Gestational Trophoblastic Disease – Webinar 2](#)

1pm, Monday 20 May 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

This webinar series is coordinated by Professor Marta Cohen, with 2 presentations.

Difficult cases and differential diagnosis

Summary: This session will cover the practical aspects of diagnosis of the previously mentioned entities. It will include how to tackle common differential diagnoses as well as highlighting a few interesting and difficult cases.

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](#)

Thursday, 26 September 2024

CPD credits: 6

[Medical Examiner training – Virtual](#)

Wednesday, 4 December 2024

CPD credits: 6

Medical examiner officer training

The College also leads on the training of [medical examiner officers](#) (MEOs).

MEOs work closely with medical examiners and undertake tasks such as coordinating the completion of death certificates and referrals to the coroner, and speaking to clinicians and bereaved families.

MEOs may come from a wide range of backgrounds. For example, nurses, healthcare scientists or bereavement officers although this list is not exhaustive. More information, including a [model job description, is on the College website.](#)

The face-to-face training day is the second part of MEO training. Everyone attending the course must have completed the 26 mandatory core e-learning modules before the date of the course to get the most out of the training day. The e-learning modules [can be accessed here](#). (Registration with e-Learning for Healthcare is required.)

[Medical examiner officer training session – Virtual Training](#)

Thursday, 17 October 2024

CPD credits: 6

News from other organisations

[The Pathologist Power list – nominations now open](#)

The Pathologist magazine Power List 2024 is open for nominations.
The categories are:

- Destined for Excellence
- In the Wings
- Heroes of Pathology
- Champions for Change
- Idols of Innovation.

Nominations close May 31 2024.

Other external events of interest

02 May 2024

[Transplant, Cell and Gene Therapy Updates](#)

02 May 2024

[Rapid Diagnostics - warts and all](#)

07-08 May 2024

[British Infection Association 26th Annual Clinical and Scientific Meeting with the Spring Trainee Day 2024](#)

07-09 May

[National Thrombosis Week 24 virtual conference](#)

08 May 2024

[5th Transforming Digital Pathology & AI Conference: The Path Forward](#)

08 May 2024

[UK Forum on Haemoglobin Disorders 57th Academic Meeting](#)

09 May 2024

[Bridging the knowledge gap: Harnessing the benefits of cross-disciplinary insights between IPC professionals, architects and M&E consultants](#)

09 -10 May 2024

[British Division of the International Academy of Pathology Summer meeting 2024](#)

10 May 2024

[Immune thrombocytopenia Update Day](#)

10 May 2024

[How to get your article rejected by The BMJ: 12 common statistical issues](#)

[15 May 2024](#)

[National Breast Pathology Update Course](#)

15 May 2024

[Group B Strep in Pregnancy & Babies Conference](#)

15 May 2024

[Acute Lymphocytic Leukaemia Patient Pathway - UCLH CAR T Masterclass](#)

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](#).