



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

RCPATH President's newsletter – September 2024



President's Message

The Darzi Report - Independent investigation of the NHS in England

The College welcomes the [publication of the Darzi report](#) this month, although it makes hard reading given the focus on the widespread failings and deficiencies in the NHS. There are, of course, several themes that all stem from relative lack of capital investment over a sustained period and failure to properly workforce plan.

The components presented by Government and the media, incorporating 'the NHS is broken', 'there is no money' and 'difficult choices have to be made', make it clear that solutions are likely to take some time. It is vital that this College fully engages with NHSE, Government and the similar processes taking place across the other 3 UK nations to shape any future fix.

Although pathology is scarcely mentioned in the report, pathology is vital in tackling the problems that Lord Darzi diagnoses – from cancer waiting lists, to managing diabetes and other long-term conditions, or supporting A&E services with vital diagnoses.

As a member of the Expert Reference Group, and with many submissions from pathology

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organisations being submitted. Colleagues and I will work harder to ensure pathology is not forgotten in the upcoming 10 year plan and other devolved nation plans.

The 10 Year Plan for NHS England

This is a very important milestone, as it will define the direction of healthcare and linked funding for the foreseeable future. We expect publication in spring next year. Having met the plan's lead, Sally Warren, last week, I discussed how pathology could be included. It was made clear the report will provide a strategic framework for delivery, focusing on broad concepts and pathways, and it will not be able to include every specialty. But the need to influence the overall plan was emphasised.

So, the College intends to develop its own 10 year plan for pathology that demonstrates the value of pathology across healthcare themes, as well as outlining the immediate, medium and long term action that we think needs to be taken around workforce, capital spend, digitisation (another Darzi theme) and innovation, such as AI.

A new RCPATH Workforce Census

The RCPATH workforce census is getting a significant revamp to better reflect the unique needs of our 17 specialties. The current form doesn't capture the full breadth of data necessary for effective workforce planning.

The new census will include more detailed information on sub-specialty interests, less-than-full-time working, career intentions, and workload. Your input and completion of the new census will be vital in supporting our workforce data collection. Further updates on its development and launch to follow.

In order for pathology's voice to be heard, it is vital that the College can collect and use data about pathology and pathologists as evidence for workforce planning and government/NHS plans. Please ensure you answer any calls for input. Our future services and professional wellbeing depend upon it.

RCPATH Celtic Nations Summit

We hosted our [inaugural Celtic Nations Summit](#) in August which brought together the Chief Scientific advisors for the 3 devolved nations, regional council members and other key College representatives. It was a great opportunity to deepen our understanding of the particular ways the health services are set up and operate, to identify shared problems and look for shared solutions.

Issues discussed included: workforce and training, IT, digital and AI and strategies for key specialties and pandemic preparedness.

We will be publishing a report of the summit later in the year.

The College is committed to strengthening relationships across all 3 devolved nations and regional council members for [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) represent their respective nations and provide professional leadership.

Northern Ireland

The College has launched its [priorities for Northern Ireland](#), drawn up by the College Northern Ireland Regional Council, for the restored executive at Stormont. The priorities document has been sent to ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The College priorities for the executive focus on investing in workforce for patients, IT and infrastructure for better patient care, staff wellbeing, learning from the pandemic.

It was a pleasure to spend a few days in **Belfast** recently. Meetings with the deputy Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific officer and other pathology leads allowed for welcomed discussion on the new “Blueprint” for pathology. A great symposium followed and then some Q&A time with trainees. It is clear that despite the challenges faced, pathology in Northern Ireland has managed to emerge with a bold organised plan that incorporates collaborative working, digitisation and LIMS alignment, and workforce planning ideas, although the latter remains a huge concern.

I look forward to visiting Cardiff, Edinburgh and Glasgow next month.

Medical examiner system moves to a statutory service

As the lead medical royal college for medical examiners, we were pleased to [welcome the move of the medical examiner system](#) to a statutory footing for England and Wales.

From 9 September 2024, all deaths across all health settings that are not investigated by a coroner will be reviewed by NHS medical examiners.

The College has long campaigned for the introduction of medical examiners and worked closely with key stakeholders for many years to implement this important patient safety initiative. Since the roll out of the non-statutory system in 2019, the College has trained over 3,000 medical examiners and officers.

[College response to the independent review of forensic pathology at the Hillsborough disaster](#)

Glenn Taylor's report sets out in detail the absence of information, understanding and empathy experienced by the families in the face of the Hillsborough tragedy.

As a College, we will carefully consider the recommendations in the report and focus on those areas where we can support change.

We welcome recognition from the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Yvette Cooper, that there needs to be resilience in pathology services, and a review of the structure of pathology in England and Wales. The recommended increase in the number of forensic pathology trainees to eight is welcome, and is the commitment to keep the situation kept under review.

The College believes that any such review must encompass the coroner service.

Parliamentary engagement

- We've had an article published in Science in Parliament, the journal of the [Parliamentary and Scientific Committee](#) - '*Embracing AI to support early diagnosis: Royal Colleges publish shared action plan*'. Science in Parliament is a key publication to be featured in as it provides a liaison between parliamentarians, scientific bodies, science-based industry and the academic world.

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

Educational Update 2024 meeting

This annual meeting will be held online on Friday 8 November 2024 at 9:45am to 12:00pm. This year's theme is focussed on reasonable adjustments for training and

examinations. The keynote speaker is Professor Kim Piper, Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology at King's College London. There will also be an update on the [award-winning Pathology Portal](#).

This free 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 is on the [College website](#).

Upcoming CPD Submission Deadline – Action Required

We are delighted to remind you of the [CPD portfolio service](#) offered by 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.

Important Aspects of the CPD Cycle

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

Need Assistance?

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

Applications for this year's RCPATH/Specialist Society Medical Elective small grant scheme are now open!

The RCPATH/Specialist Society Medical Elective Small Grant Scheme was introduced as a new initiative to commemorate the College's Diamond Jubilee in 2022. This scheme is a collaborative effort between RCPATH and partner societies representing various disciplines. It aims to provide financial assistance of up to £1,000 to undergraduate medical and veterinary students who are interested in pursuing electives in pathology disciplines.

These electives can be either clinical or research-based and can be undertaken anywhere in the world. More information can be found on the [College](#) website. The deadline for submission is Monday 30 September 2024. Successful applicants will be notified in October 2024.

[Volunteering Opportunities – The Access Project](#)

RCPATH members and Fellows are invited to consider volunteering as a tutor for [The Access Project](#).

The Access Project supports pupils from under-resourced backgrounds to access top universities. We are looking for undergraduates, postgraduates, staff, and alumni who would be able to tutor a young person aged 14-16, online, one hour a week in term-time Autumn 2024- Summer 2025 to support them with their academic studies. No prior teaching or tutoring experience necessary, we provide a full comprehensive training and induction to help you build the confidence to be the best volunteer you can be. We'll match you with a student who is looking for support in your subject.

Find out more and [sign up here](#).

The Pathology Portal

The Pathology Portal offers an extensive collection of over 5,500 resources across various specialties, including case studies, lectures, recap videos, podcasts, and quizzes. Tailored to support the professional development of pathologists at all career stages, these resources have been accessed more than 190,000 times by over 4,000 users from diverse backgrounds.

Recently, following the celebration of the portal's two-year anniversary, the platform was showcased at the new trainee welcome days, highlighting some of the valuable resources available for supporting further learning and improving professional practice. The team also continues to engage with specialists interested in contributing content, including 50 new ocular cases in neuropathology.

If you haven't yet explored the Pathology Portal, you can find more details on how to join by [visiting the College website](#). We value your support and encourage you to share your feedback, questions, suggestions, or content by contacting us at pathologyportal@rcpath.org.

Get involved in the College

[Chair for the National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel for Medical Microbiology](#)

Are you interested in playing a key role in overseeing and monitoring the correct operation of External Quality Assessment schemes in the speciality of medical microbiology?

The College is currently looking for a [Chair for the National Quality Assurance Advisory Panel for Medical Microbiology](#), a crucial leadership role in the work of External Quality Assurance, which plays a pivotal role in patient safety and improving patients' experiences of healthcare. The Chair 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 practice 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 Emma Lord, EQA Projects Officer, on emma.lord@rcpath.org. Deadline: 30 September at 5pm.

Regional news

[RCPath Wales Symposium 2024](#)

- This is an in-person only event.
 - **Date & Time:** 25 October 2024, 12.30-5pm
 - **Venue:** to be confirmed (Cardiff)
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This symposium is aimed at RCPATH fellows, members, trainees and others interested in the range of pathology specialties in Wales. Delegates will hear presentations about upcoming themes in the field of pathology and have the opportunity to share some of the great developments happening in Wales. They will also hear from the President Dr Bernie Croal about the College's work in Wales.

International

Key Skills to enhance an academic career - Webinar Series

In October the International Team will be delivering a free 2-part webinar series exploring 'Key skills to enhance an academic career'. This series will provide pathologists from around the world with skills to utilise outside of the laboratory to help facilitate progress in an academic career. Each webinar will have 2-3 speakers delivering presentations followed by a Q&A session. Please click these links to find out more about each webinar on [Monday 14 October](#) and [Friday 18 October](#).

Join Professor Dame Sally Davies, UK Special Envoy for AMR, at this year's International Pathology Day – secure your place!

We are delighted to welcome Professor Dame Sally Davies, the UK's Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance, as keynote speaker at our virtual conference for International Pathology Day themed 'The Rise of Global Antimicrobial Resistance'.

Additional speakers include Professor Walid Al-Wali, who will discuss the evolution of AMR and Dr Wael Elamin's presentation will focus on environmental work he is involved with in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). More speakers will be announced in the coming weeks.

Find out more at our [event page](#) for updates on speaker announcements, details about the poster competition, and access to free virtual IPD resources as they become available and register to attend at our [booking page](#).

Enter the Poster competition for International Pathology Day 2024 - Conquering Superbugs: Innovations in combating Antimicrobial Resistance

We invite you to showcase your lab work, whether individually or as a team, from around the world and highlight your innovative research across various pathology specialties. You can draw inspiration from this year's International Pathology Day (IPD) overarching theme 'The rise of global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)' or spotlight any pathology-related work you are especially proud of.

Posters can be submitted to international@rcpath.org until **midnight Wednesday 23 October (BST)**. All posters will be displayed digitally on the College website, and winners will be announced at the International Pathology Day conference on Wednesday 6 November.

Prizes

- **First prize:** £150 and publication of your poster in the College's Bulletin magazine
- **Second prize:** £50 and featuring of your poster in our post-event blog, celebrating International Pathology Day 2024

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- **Third prize:** complimentary tickets to attend the virtual conference for International Pathology Day 2025. For more details please visit [our website](#).

New publications

The following [College guideline](#) is in consultation:

- [G187 Dataset for histopathological reporting of carcinomas and mucinous neoplasms of the appendix](#) (closes 26 September)

College Courses

[Autopsy webinar series – Sickle cell disease](#)

1pm, Wednesday 16 October 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

The session will include a presentation of the common causes of death in sickle cell disease, based on local data, including a large series performed by Prof. Sebastian Lucas'. This will be followed by case vignettes illustrating autopsy pathology from sickle cell disease deaths.

This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

This event will take place via zoom at 12:30pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[Diagnostic Neurobiomarkers – webinar](#)

1pm, Thursday 10 October 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

In this webinar Dr Hart will discuss the role of various biomarkers to aid the diagnosis of neurological disease and will describe recent advances in the fields of neurodegeneration and neuroinflammation.

This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[Autopsy webinar series – Autopsy renal pathology](#)

1pm, Wednesday 30 October

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

This webinar will discuss common renal pathology encountered in routine autopsy practice, and the value of renal histology in understanding causes of death.

This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[Autopsy webinar series - Post Mortem CT](#)

1pm, Wednesday 20 November 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

During this session we will discuss how the CTPM service in Leicester operates, the triaging of cases for CTPM (plain or angiography), the importance of our consultant radiologist colleagues in reporting the images and how this guides us with either providing a cause of death or by

refining our subsequent investigations in determining the cause of death e.g. limited or targeted invasive post mortem examination +/- histology, microbiology/virology.

This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[Autopsy webinar series – The Human Tissue Authority](#)

27 November 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) regulates organisations that remove, store and use tissue for post-mortem examination, medical treatment, research, teaching and display in public. Making sure human tissue, cells and organs are handled with dignity, used with consent and stored safely, is at the heart of what we do.

This talk will explore the role of the HTA in regulating the Post Mortem sector within England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The discussion will cover a brief history, the Human Tissue Act 2004 legislation, the HTA's regulatory framework and the regulatory tools and activities we have developed in this diverse sector.

We regulate in an environment of ongoing change, technical advances and challenges. We will share how the HTA reflects on lessons learned to achieve our aim, of being an excellent, modern and accountable regulator dealing proportionately with the sector, whilst supporting licensed establishments to achieve the set standards.

This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[From snails to sperm whales: PMs across 10 orders of magnitude](#)

1pm, Thursday 28 November 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Dr Simon Spiro is the veterinary pathologist for the Zoological Society of London, where he is responsible for the diagnostic pathology of the society's 23,000 animals of 800 species. He is also the pathologist for the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP) which investigates dead whales, dolphins, sharks, turtles, and seals in English and Welsh waters. In this talk he will cover the what, where, how and why of wildlife pathology, covering everything from the practicalities of performing post mortem examinations on everything from tiny invertebrates up to massive whales, to the science and conservation work that results. This talk will cover topics such as cholesterol mediated diseases in meerkats, bacterial diseases in bats and orthopaedic disease in whales, all told with the aid of pictures, video and digital microscopy.

This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[An update on feline soft tissue sarcomas; where are we now, and where do we go next?](#)

12.30pm, Tuesday 3 December 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

The past, the present and hopefully the future of prognosticating feline soft tissue sarcomas; this webinar aims to give an overview of where we currently are regarding the histological grading of feline soft tissue sarcomas, with some insight into the origins via grading STS in humans and canine, and the development of the proposed grading system in cats. It will look at some of the challenges, including nomenclature, subtyping, the complication of feline

injection site sarcomas, and the subjectivity of some aspects. It will also look at where we would like to go in the future....

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](#)

Thursday, 16 January 2025

CPD credits: 6

[Medical Examiner training – Virtual](#)

Tuesday, 25 March 2025

CPD credits: 6

[Medical Examiner training – In-person](#)

Thursday, 5 June 2025

CPD credits: 6

Please contact the college events team for further information on training dates on meetings@rcpath.org.

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.)

Please contact the college events team for further information on training dates on meetings@rcpath.org.

News from other organisations

PGCert in Paediatric Infectious Diseases – University of Oxford

The Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Paediatric Infectious Diseases is a part-time, online course directing students through the syllabus required in Europe for clinical training in the subspecialty. The course is appropriate for both those in the UK and Overseas. For more information visit the [University of Oxford website](#).

Other external events of interest

01 October 2024

[The National Pathology Imaging Co-Operative – lessons learned and top tips!](#)

02 October 2024

[Digital Pathology and Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) showcase](#)

02 October 2024

[The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust - Infection Prevention United](#)

02-05 October

[Academy for Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia \(ASCAT\) Conference: The 19th Annual Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Conference](#)

04 October 2024

[National Acute Lymphoblastic leukaemia \(ALL\) Update Day](#)

04 October

[Wessex & Gloucestershire Gastrointestinal Pathology Course](#)

04 October 2024

[Venous thromboembolism \(VTE\) Dublin/VTE together](#)

04-05 October 2024

[Irish Society of Surgical Pathology Annual Scientific Meeting](#)

07 October 2024

[UK Chronic Lymphocytic leukemia \(CLL\) Forum Clinical Sciences Day](#)

09 October 2024

[South West Haemostasis and Thrombosis Meeting](#)

10 October 2024

[Backlogs Autumn Webinars 2024](#)

10 October 2024

[Current Thinking in Haematological Malignancies- Edinburgh](#)

11 October 2024

[Current Thinking in Haematological Malignancies- Manchester](#)

11 October 2024

[The role of genetic testing in haemostasis](#)

14 October 2024

[Autumn Study Day 2024](#)

15 October 2024

[Johnson & Johnson Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis \(GRAPPA\) Webinars 2024](#)

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