

RCPATH President's newsletter – June 2024



President's Message

General election

Campaigning is well underway and, with the manifestos published, the future policies of the parties that may form the next government are becoming clearer. It is hugely disappointing that none of the leading parties appear to have planned for the level of investment that many of us feel is necessary to both reduce waiting lists and to build a healthcare system fit for the future demands that we expect to see.

Across pathology services, the impact of healthcare policy of recent years has led to reduced capacity, sluggish innovation and, most importantly, staff shortages. These shortages, in both pathologists and scientists, are now precipitating service collapse in many areas. Today it's paediatric and perinatal services, immunology and coronial autopsy that are under extreme pressure; it's not hard to predict that other pathology services are likely to follow without targeted intervention.

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It is more important than ever that we have a robust royal college that can strongly advocate and lobby for both the profession and for patients. We will continue to work collaboratively and proactively with whichever party takes up office – and challenge robustly when needed.

College priorities for the new government

We have clearly set out our priorities, calling on the next government to address the key challenges that you face in delivering the best patient care. While there is a long potential shortlist, we have focused on 4 key areas.

Our 4 priorities are:

- investing in workforce for patients
- tailoring treatment for patients
- harnessing digital pathology for better patient care
- diagnosis closer to patients.

You can [view the full document here](#).

New College strategy

Our new strategy for the next 5 years has continued to evolve in recent months. Top billing goes to a new workforce strategy, which highlights the urgent need for expansion of training numbers and consultant posts further down the line. Attracting and retaining existing staff is vital. There is a need for services to reform so that they can be more efficient and faster, delivered by a broad church with the necessary skills and competences that keep our services safe.

Finally, pragmatically, we also need to consider contingency planning for the inevitability that we will not be able to do everything we are asked to do – a planned, controlled approach is always better in these circumstances. This will require some hard decisions to be taken and our new Pathology Alliance Diagnostic Stewardship Group will assist in this, along with other stakeholders.

Pathology cyber attack

The recent events hitting services provided by Synnovis across South London highlights both the vulnerability of our pathology IT systems and the impact on healthcare when pathology is not working properly – a reported 10,000 GP requests per day was reduced to 400, with 800 operations cancelled so far, including 18 transplants.

This news, together with the likelihood that the situation is set to continue for some time, has led to calls for other local pathology services to provide support. It seems that already stretched services can only provide limited help and the lack of interoperability makes it functionally tough.

Pathology services around the country will all have written contingency plans for this and other catastrophes – but we all know they will be limited. This is a warning to other services and there are bound to be lessons to take away from this incident – but make no mistake, **patient care is at risk.**

National Volunteers' Week

At the start of June, we celebrated [Volunteers' Week](#) by recognising the thousands of members who volunteer across the College. Your volunteering spans the College's governing bodies and committees, training and exams, professional guidelines, workforce and engagement.

You can read about our volunteer members via our spotlight blog series:

- [Volunteers' Week 2024: volunteering as Chair of an NQAAP](#)
- [Volunteers' Week 2024: volunteering as an International Regional Advisor](#)
- [Volunteers' Week 2024: volunteering as a Public Engagement Coordinator](#)
- [Volunteers' Week 2024: volunteering as Chair of a Specialty Advisory Committee](#)
- [Volunteers' Week 2024: volunteering throughout a pathology career.](#)

It is only through collective action that we are able to enhance the pathology profession. Whether advocating for improved workforce conditions, setting the highest standards for pathology services, or inspiring junior doctors to choose a career in pathology, all of this relies on an active membership who believe in the value of our work. If you don't yet volunteer, there are many roles across the College, including [3 elected College Council positions](#).

The College simply could not deliver

these vital services without your help and expertise.

I hope we've inspired you to [get involved](#).

Parliamentary engagement

Reconstituting the All Party-Parliamentary Group for Diagnostics post-election

Now that parliament has dissolved, the [APPG for Diagnostics](#), which we host with the Royal College of Radiologists, is currently inactive. It will be reconstituted after the election, when we will work on a plan for the year ahead and agree which policy areas will be our focus. This will be shaped by the direction of the new government and the key priorities in our College priorities document.

Influencing our stakeholders

- Dr Sian Morgan, Chair of the College SAC on Genomics and Reproductive Science, delivered a powerful speech at the [Westminster Health Forum](#) conference on the need to adopt and embed genomic medicine in the NHS.
- The importance of working across sectors to tackle antibiotic resistance was raised clearly in [The Guardian](#) by College Fellow, Professor Roberto La Ragione.

[HSJ Digital Awards 2024 – The Pathology Portal](#)

The Pathology Portal [was awarded highly commended at prestigious HSJ Digital Awards 2024](#) in early

June. Shortlisted for a Digital Literacy, Education and Upskilling Award, this commendation recognises the commitment shown by the Pathology Portal to enhancing the professional development of pathologists and being shortlisted was a wonderful expression of the work done by all the different members of the community.

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

RCPATH Foundation Fellowships

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 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](#).

Race in Medicine Seminar

The Royal College of Pathologists EDI Network, and the [Pathological Society](#), is pleased to be able to invite you to join us for a half-day seminar to discuss [race in medicine](#).

Delegates will have the opportunity to hear Professor Andrea Deyrup and Professor Joseph Graves Jr talk about their research into racialisation of disease in medicine in the US (and beyond).

This is the first time they have presented their cutting-edge research in the UK, and we are excited to help them share their findings.

After their talks, delegates will have an opportunity to discuss the learning we can take away for UK pathology practice and how this might influence clinical practice, teaching, research, and EDI initiatives at a national and local level. Please contact reshma.patel@rcpath.org for more information. For more information about the College's EDI work [visit the website](#).

Pathology Alliance Regulatory Webinar

On 23 April, BIVDA organised and hosted Pathology Alliance Regulatory Webinar for members of the Pathology Alliance. The event aimed at laboratory and healthcare professionals seeking to understand the changes and challenges related to medical device and IVD regulations, was also supported by the MHRA and ABHI. The webinar recording [can be found here](#).

Ensuring that the UK patients will continue to have access to safe and effective medical tests, including those manufactured in house is a key priority. The alliance has [launched a survey](#) seeking feedback on general regulatory practices. The deadline to is Friday, 28 June 2024. A webinar on regulations affecting laboratory developed tests will be organised by BIVDA and ABHI in near future.

Percy Oliver Memorial Award

The College's Transfusion Medicine Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) is inviting nominations for this year's Percy Oliver Memorial Award.

The Memorial Award is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of blood transfusion. This year's award will be given to a person in the **Medical Category**.

Nominations and accompanying citations should be submitted by 5pm Friday 12 July 2024 via this [link](#).

Please use the citation to describe your nominee's background, achievements, and contributions to the field of blood transfusion, in no more than 750 words; furthermore, please demonstrate the impact that they have made to the field.

Art of Pathology Competition – open to all

The College's annual [Art of Pathology competition](#) is an opportunity for people of all ages to submit paintings, drawings, sculptures, digital art, collages or any other media on a specific theme. This year's theme is 'The Science Behind the Cure'. Participants are invited to interpret this theme in their own unique and creative way, while exploring different aspects of pathology.

There are 3 categories for entries: under 11s, 11–17 and adults (over 18s). The Art of Pathology competition is kindly sponsored by [Sonic Healthcare UK](#) and closes on 30 August 2024. Find out more about the competition and get inspired by previous winners [here](#).

[RCPath Science Communication Prize – open to undergraduates, foundation doctors and trainees](#)

Our [Science Communication Prize](#) is an award given to a pathology trainee, Foundation doctor or undergraduate who has shown excellence in their science communication activities throughout the year. Two prizes of £500 will be awarded, one for each of the following categories.

Trainee category - UK pathology trainees

Undergraduate category - UK undergraduates and Foundation doctors

This annual prize is kindly sponsored by Sonic Healthcare UK. Submit your application by 29 July 2024. Find out more [here](#).

Di-Blood-UK: Survey on Bloodstream Infections

NITCAR invites microbiologists to participate in a survey on blood culture diagnostic practices in UK labs. The goal is to identify potential improvements in diagnostic protocols.

For full details and the survey link, visit: [NITCAR website](#).

Deadline: Wednesday, 31 July 2024.

CPD deadline reminder

We are pleased to be able 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 1st April to 31st 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 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

The Pathology Portal

The Pathology Portal offers a collection of over 5,500 resources across various specialties, including long and short cases, informative lectures and short recap videos, podcasts, quizzes, and much more, catering to the professional development needs of pathologists at various stages of their careers.

These resources have now been accessed over 150,000 times and the Pathology Portal team continues to engage with new contributors to expand content and address gaps, in the past month the Pathology Portal has been used to host slides and content for training days and EQAs, preserving valuable resources that might otherwise be lost. The Pathology Portal also noticed an increase in user engagement and activity during the recent exam period, as pathologists utilise the resources as part of their preparations.

The user base now exceeds 3,500 members from a range of backgrounds, we invite those who have not yet joined the Pathology Portal to explore the platform and discover its wealth of resources. More information on how to join can be found at [Pathology Portal](#).

We value your ongoing support and welcome your feedback, questions, suggestions, or content at pathologyportal@rcpath.org.

Get involved in the College

College roles

The College is currently advertising the following posts:

- [Medical Microbiology Recruitment Lead](#), closing date: 12 July. A medical microbiologist is sought to lead recruitment on behalf of the specialty.
- [Histological Dissection Conjoint Board member \(College representative\)](#) closing date: 19 July. Apply to become a College representative on the Histological Dissection Conjoint Board of the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Scientists.
- [Cytology Reporting Conjoint Board member \(College representative\)](#) closing date: 19 July. Apply to become a College representative on the Cytology Conjoint Board of the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Scientists.
- [Histopathology Reporting Conjoint Board member \(College representative\)](#) closing date: 19 July. Apply to become a College representative on the Histopathology Reporting Conjoint Board of the Royal College of Pathologists and the Institute of Biomedical Scientists.

Three vacant roles – College Council

The nomination phase for the election of the College Council members opened on Friday 7 June 2024.

All eligible Fellows have been sent information direct by [Civica](#), who are managing the process on behalf of the College.

As a member of College Council, the elected Member will provide advice and input into debate on matters relating to the practice of pathology as a profession, including all the professional, clinical, education and research functions of the College. The contribution should include both professional knowledge related to topics under discussion but specifically should focus on representing members' views from the region and any specific regional interests.

The vacant roles are:

- Nationally Elected Council Member (1 post)
- English Regional Representative (3 posts - South, Midlands and East England, London).

Information on the roles can be found [here](#). Nominations will be accepted up to midday on Friday 5 July 2024

International

Free 6-part Global Antimicrobial Resistance webinar series

We are delivering a free 6-part Global Antimicrobial Resistance webinar series that will explore different aspects of antimicrobial resistance and stewardship. Each webinar will start with a UK speaker providing an introduction to the topic and UK perspective, then there will be 2-4 international speakers providing the perspective from their respective countries. Below outlines the structure of the programme, if you'd like to register for each webinar please follow the respective link and click 'Book Now'.

Programme:

- Wednesday 3 July - [Developing prescribing guidelines.](#)

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- Friday 12 July - [Evaluating an antimicrobial stewardship programme: What are the measures of success?](#)

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.

New publications

New guidelines

The following College [autopsy guidelines](#) have been published:

- G160 Guidelines on autopsy practice: Fetal autopsy following antepartum or intrapartum death of non-malformed fetuses
- G161 Guidelines on autopsy practice: Fetal autopsy of 2nd trimester fetal loss (excluding termination of pregnancy for congenital anomaly)
- G193 Guidelines on autopsy practice: Fetal autopsy after termination of pregnancy or fetal loss associated with congenital anomaly.

College Courses

[Hereditary Angioedema; pathophysiology, drug targets and update on management - Webinar](#) **1pm, Monday 1 July 2024**

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Hereditary angioedema is a rare disease that results in cutaneous and mucosal swellings. The swellings can happen in association with physiological and psychological stress or with no obvious precipitating factors. They can be debilitating and even life-threatening.

In this talk a practical approach to diagnosis of different types of swellings and the pathways that lead to angioedema, will be discussed. The targets that have been used for development of treatment for hereditary angioedema will be identified when discussing the pathophysiological pathways. Finally, management of hereditary angioedema including the latest treatments will be presented.

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

[Autopsy webinar series – Diabetes and the autopsy](#) **1pm, Monday 10 July 2024**

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Diabetes mellitus has a high prevalence in affluent societies and is a common disease encountered at autopsy. Sudden death due to ketoacidosis is frequently encountered at autopsy, principally due to diabetic and alcoholic ketoacidosis. Often diabetic ketoacidosis occurs in people not known to have a

history of diabetes. This webinar discusses approaches to the identification of deaths from diabetic and alcoholic ketoacidosis at autopsy, including macroscopic and microscopic features and use of ancillary testing including blood and vitreous biochemistry. This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

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

1pm, Wednesday 18 September 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

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

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

1pm, Wednesday 16 October 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

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

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

1pm, Wednesday 20 November 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

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

[Autopsy webinar series - Resuscitation and pre-hospital care-related injuries](#)

1pm, Wednesday 11 December 2024

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

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

Medical examiner officer training

The College 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

Apply to become a medical editor for the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs)

The UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations Steering Committee are seeking applicants for medical editors from members of UK SMIs partner organisations. The medical editor will work directly with the Standards Unit team. Applicants need experience in editing scientific literature and must be currently working within clinical microbiology. Applicants will be expected to have an understanding of clinical or medical microbiology and possess the ability to provide editing across a wide range of diagnostic microbiology (including bacteriology). Applicants should be able to demonstrate the ability to edit a number of UK SMIs to tight deadlines.

If you would like to discuss this post with a member of the Standards Unit team or receive the job description and person specification, then please email standards@ukhsa.gov.uk quoting UK SMI Medical Editor in the subject heading. The closing date for applications is Friday 26 July 2024.

Other external events of interest

04 July 2024

[International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis \(ISTH\) 2024 Highlights through a UK lens](#)

04 July 2024

[Epidemiological scenario and clinical burden of Human metapneumovirus \(HMPV or hMPV\) and Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\) infections](#)

08 July 2024

[Early Career Summer Conference 2024](#)

08 July 2024

[British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapies \(BSBMTCT\) Scientific Showcase: Advanced Cellular Therapy](#)

09 July 2024

[Annual Serious Hazards of Transfusion \(SHOT\) Symposium 2024](#)

18 July 2024

[AI in Pathology: Research meets Reality](#)

21-23 August 2024

[The Diagnexia Histopathology Symposium 2024](#)

01-05 September 2024

[International Biennial Pseudomonas Conference](#)

09-10 September 2024

[Lymphoma Management 2024](#)

13 September 2024

[UK and Ireland myeloproliferative neoplasms educational day for allied health professionals, nurses and pharmacists](#)

24 September 2024

[7th South West Stem Cell Transplant Day](#)

26-27 September 2024

[Cardiac Biomarkers in Real Time: Experiences and opportunities](#)

27 September 2024

[Chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy \(CAR T\) Therapy for Autoimmune Disease](#)

30 September -01 October

[British Association of Urological Pathology Advanced Prostate Pathology Course](#)

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](#)