



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

## RCPATH President's newsletter – January 2024



### President's Message

#### 2024 – An important year

I am currently experiencing my usual Aberdeenshire Winter – snow gates are up, roads are closed, prolonged sub-zero temperatures, annoying post-covid respiratory symptoms and juggling clinical work/on-call while making sure I don't infect my colleagues or patients. It's the usual winter for healthcare as well.... Increasing clinical pressure, inadequate capacity and staff, industrial action for some, and efficiency cuts on the way – we just get on with it of course....

Workforce issues continue to dominate concerns both now and for the future. The increasingly sick, obese and ageing UK population will inevitably require more healthcare including pathology services. Added to this the additional workload that is released as the backlog of NHS care begins to be dealt with in the coming years. Workforce planning to deal with this requires knowledge not just about workload trends but also workforce – number of posts, vacancies, trainees, retirement intentions – it's not rocket science but, sadly, it's not being done well ....

The NHS (England) long term workforce plan, and others across the Celtic nations, of course show recognition and commitment to the problem. But the timescales are long term and the funding remains to be identified, at least for the increases in future specialty training and consultant posts that we urgently need. Meanwhile it is vital that this college works closely with other bodies, service providers and the NHSs to collect, refine and share data



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around pathology workforce/workload so that an accurate, robust and strong workforce plan can be developed for pathology. Retention and reform also remain important and, with this, ensuring that the wellbeing of pathology staff is optimised. College surveys remain important, and while we typically see low response rates, the information is still very useful to contribute to the overall intelligence on pathology services.

2024 is going to be a very busy time politically within the UK and overseas. This College will be working hard to ensure our manifesto for the next Government is visible to all parties, the media and the electorate. We will also engage firmly and timely with any new government that emerges. As well as workforce, one pressing concern exists around new regulatory reforms for In-Vitro Diagnostic tests which risk potential catastrophic removal of specific tests from both the market and within pathology repertoires. We continue to discuss this issue within the Pathology Alliance, liaise with the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and will be issuing guidance to members in the coming months to raise both awareness and to consider contingency planning.

Overall, there are lots of things for the College to do this year, things that are so important to College members, pathology services, and patients. As ever, we are hugely dependent on our staff, officers and many volunteers from our membership to continue to provide much valued collaborative efforts – many thanks.

### **RCPATH Workload Points Guidance for Cell Path**

The new 5th edition of the RCPATH Workload Points (Cell Path) will be published in the next few weeks. This new edition reflects significant changes to working practices that have occurred during this time in relation to surgical and laboratory practices, molecular testing, and ongoing advancements in technology (such as digital pathology and Artificial Intelligence). While not universally used to allocate work within all departments, it should be sensibly used as a metric to quantify workload at departmental level and to aid individual pathologist's job planning exercises.

It is likely that this will be an increasingly important tool in workforce planning nationally.

### **New report about Community Diagnostic Centres**

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Diagnostics has published its first report, which examines the effectiveness of the Government's flagship Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) programme. The APPG secretariat is provided by the College and the Royal College of Radiologists.

The APPG took evidence from those involved in the delivery of the CDCs and found there are benefits from CDCs. In some cases diagnostic capacity has been expanded to bring down waiting lists and, when situated in the heart of communities, CDCs can offer convenient services to those who may not typically seek healthcare. Significant challenges persist however, not least staffing of the centres from an already over stretched pathology workforce, compounded by chronic shortages. [Read more on the College website.](#)

### **Memorandum of Understanding signed with Kurdistan**

In November, the College signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health, Kurdistan region, Iraq and Kurdistan Higher Council of Medical specialities, to support the education of pathologists in this region. We were pleased to host His Excellency Dr Saman Hussein Muhammad, Minister of Health, and his colleagues, at the College and arranged a tour of lab facilities at Imperial College. [See the College website.](#)

The Mail online also ran exclusive covering the report: [\*The NHS has spent £2.3 billion on testing hubs in shopping centres and even car showrooms to cut waiting lists. So why aren't more patients being sent to them?\*](#)

### **Parliamentary engagement**

The Government has decided to take forward the [UK National Screening Committee recommendation](#) on use of digital images to make it easier to identify cancer and speed up diagnosis based on evidence from the College

and the National Coordinating Committee for Breast Pathology.,

This will help:

- Digital pathology to speed up and support diagnosis for cancer patients.
- Government and NHS England back UK National Screening Committee recommendation on digital pathology
- Reviewing tissue sample images digitally will boost breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening.

### **APPG on Baby Loss**

We joined the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss. Their focus was the MBBRACE UK Confidential Enquiries into Black and Asian baby deaths, and Sand's Listening Project, which hears directly from bereaved Black and Asian parents. We continue to feed into this influential group on the significant shortages in perinatal pathology services.

### **King's New Year Honours**

It was great to see several College fellows recognised in the recent New Year Honours – many congratulations to them all. [Visit the College website.](#)

### **Dr Bernie Croal**

**President, The Royal College of Pathologists**

X: [@BernieCroal](#)

## **In this issue:**

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- WORKING FOR MEMBERS
- GET INVOLVED AT THE COLLEGE
- NEW PUBLICATIONS
- REGIONAL NEWS

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- OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

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

## Working for members

### The Pathology Portal

We're delighted to be able to share that the Pathology Portal now offers an extensive collection of 5,000 resources, ranging from diverse cases and videos to insightful podcasts, quizzes for learning assessment, and other educational materials. These resources are tailored to meet the professional development needs of pathologists globally, and our userbase has grown to over 2,500 individuals. Your continued support is important to our success and we invite you to share your feedback on your Pathology Portal experience. Whether you have questions, suggestions, or valuable content for the platform, the team is here to assist you and can be contacted at [pathologyportal@rcpath.org](mailto:pathologyportal@rcpath.org).

### Find out more about the CPD credits that you can claim

Did you know that there are many activities that you can get credits for your CPD? For example, you can gain credits for mentoring activities. We have published a [handy guide](#) to help you claim your CPD credits. You will see that you can also self-accredit for doing an activity not included in the guide. Please drop us an email if you have any questions about CPD.

E: [mycollege@rcpath.org](mailto:mycollege@rcpath.org). T: 020 7451 6720.

### New digital format for The Bulletin

This month the College will be launching a new digital [Bulletin](#), which will deliver content in a fully digital and interactive format, bringing you an improved reading experience. With new features, you will be able to discover more about the new look Bulletin through our how-to guides and videos on our [website](#).

### Launch of the Research Fellowship Start-Up Grant

The College Research Committee is very pleased to announce the launch of the Research Fellowship Start-Up Grant, which provides support to postgraduate and undergraduate students at the beginning of their research project for up to one year. A maximum amount of £4,000 will be awarded to postgraduate students and £1,000 to undergraduate students. The grants can support work in any discipline of medical or veterinary pathology and are not restricted to cellular pathology or histopathology. Full details of the submission process, eligibility criteria and application form are available on the [website](#). Deadline 31 January 2024.

### International Collaboration on Cancer Reporting (ICCR) datasets consultation

The ICCR draft on the Central Nervous System (CNS) dataset [is now available for comments](#) until Friday 23rd February 2024.

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## Applying for specialist registration

From 30 November, Doctors applying for specialist registration will do so via the portfolio pathway. Doctors will need to provide evidence that they have the knowledge, skills and experience required to practise as a specialist in the UK. Doctors are no longer required to demonstrate equivalence to the respective CCT curriculum (a requirement of the previous CESR pathway) but must instead demonstrate how they meet the high-level outcomes, known as Capabilities in Practice. Further information, including specialty specific guidance and applicant templates can now be found on the [College website](#).

## Get involved at the College

## International

### Medlab Middle East Conference - Dubai

Between 5-8 February the College will be attending Medlab Middle East conference in Dubai.

We are excited to announce that College is attending Medlab Middle East 2024 in Dubai. The new College President, Dr Bernie Croal will be there accompanied by other College Fellows and members of the RCPATH International Team, from **Monday 5 to Thursday 8 February**. We are looking forward to hosting and contributing to a variety of opportunities the congress offers to its visitors as outlined below:

- **Monday 5 February at 12:00 GST**, Dr Bernie Croal will deliver a keynote talk on appropriate utilisation of laboratory testing – strategies to ensure lab testing is focused and safe.
- **Monday 5 February from 13:45 – 15:45 GST**, the College will be conducting a workshop where Dr Bernie Croal will outline some of the College's history and his vision for the College and its international work. Then Professor Walid Al-Wali will deliver a presentation on the 'The Global Challenge of Antimicrobial Resistance: In the Middle East and Beyond. After which there will be the opportunity to network and meet Dr Croal, College Fellows and members of the international team.
- **Tuesday 6 February at 11:20 GST**, Professor Walid Al-Wali will deliver a talk on the role of the clinical microbiology laboratory in diagnostic and antimicrobial stewardship.
- **Tuesday 6 February at 15:00 GST**, Dr Karin Denton will deliver a presentation on developments in cervical screening – is self-sampling the future?
- **Monday 5 to Thursday 8 February**, come and talk to members of the International Team and College Fellows at our exhibition stand.

We look forward to seeing you, if you have any questions between now and the time of the congress, please do contact [international@rcpath.org](mailto:international@rcpath.org)

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## New publications

### New publications

- [Dataset for histopathological reporting of vulval carcinomas](#)

## College courses

### [PathQuest: Exploring careers in Neuropathology & Paediatric Pathology!](#)

7pm, Wednesday 24 January 2024

**CPD credits: 2**

Are you interested in exploring what a career in neuropathology or paediatric & perinatal pathology can offer you? Then this is the event for you! Come and join us for this virtual session where you can meet current trainees from both subspecialties, and hear from them about why they chose to enter training, examples of interesting/unusual cases and what you can do next to prepare yourself for the application. You will also have the opportunity to ask our live Q&A panel about any aspects of the job or training that you want! It is an opportunity to make useful contacts who can support your application going forwards.

Everyone is welcome to join including pathology trainees at any stage of training, foundation doctors or undergraduates who are wanting to know more!

We are aiming to show you why sub-specialisation is a very positive and exciting opportunity in cellular pathology, and what working in neuropathology and paediatric & perinatal pathology can do for you!

### [Paediatric Lymphoma - Webinar 1](#)

12.30pm, Monday 29 January 2024

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

Join Professor Leticia Quintanilla-Martinez as she presents EVB associated T and NK cell lymphoproliferative disorders on Childhood.

Followed by Dr. Choi as he discusses selective cases of common large cell lymphomas of childhood, focusing on histologic pattern, differential diagnosis, and ancillary workup necessary for a final diagnosis.

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

### [Paediatric Lymphoma - Webinar 2](#)

12.30pm, Monday 5 February 2024

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

Join Professor Falko Fend as he reviews current classifications of histiocytic disorders, clinical and diagnostic features and the underlying molecular pathogenesis.

Followed by Dr. Choi as he discusses selective cases of reactive lymphadenopathies in childhood, focusing on histologic pattern, lymphoma look-alike, and ancillary workup necessary for a final diagnosis.

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

### [Penicillin allergy/GA allergy/drug allergy update – Webinar](#)

**12.30pm, Friday 19 April 2024**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

The session will include an introduction on the basic clinical presentation and mechanisms of drug allergy before focusing on updates on penicillin allergy de-labelling and anaesthetic drug allergy. There has been a growth in interest in penicillin allergy de-labelling as most labels are in fact not correct, and there is associated harm by avoiding penicillin unnecessarily. There are, however, several challenges with de-labelling in both specialist and non-specialist settings. Anaesthetic drug allergy has also attracted recent interest since the publication of the 6th National Audit Project (NAP6) of the Royal College of Anaesthetists. NAP6 highlighted significant need for change in practice. The session will provide an overview in these areas and finish with a panel question and answer session.

### [New Consultants Day - virtual meeting](#)

**Wednesday 24 April 2024**

**CPD credits: 6**

The New Consultants' Day is an event to help and support those recently appointed to a consultant post, or who will soon be taking one up. It is appropriate for all pathology specialties and for both medically-trained pathologists and clinical scientists.

You will hear from experienced consultants on a range of topics such as how to prepare a business case to secure resources, how to set up new services and how best to deal with complaints, and learn more about appraisal, revalidation and job planning (parallel session for medically-trained pathologists) and the experiences of consultant clinical scientists (parallel session for clinical scientists), among other things. It is most suitable for those appointed to a consultant post within the last year, or who expect to be appointed to a consultant post within the next year.

### **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 – In-person](#)

**Thursday, 6 June 2024**

**CPD credits: 6**

### [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, 9 May 2024](#)**

**CPD credits: 6**

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

**[Thursday, 17 October 2024](#)**

**CPD credits: 6**

**News from other organisations**

## Other external events of interest

14-19 January 2024

[Genomics and Clinical Microbiology](#)

19 January 2024

[Research opportunities in precision medicine for Haematology](#)

22 January 2024

[A CLL refresher with gems from ASH23 - The Evening Training Course](#)

23-24 January 2024

[Post ASH Significant Highlights](#)

24 January 2024

[6th Infection Dilemma Day](#)

24-25 January 2024

[The British Association of Urological Pathologists Advanced Bladder Pathology Course](#)

25-26 January 2024

[Janssen GRAPPA UK Workshop 2024](#)

25-27 January 2024

[11th Advances Against Aspergillosis & Mucormycosis Conference](#)

26 January 2024

[49th Annual Topics in Infection](#)

26 January 2024

[BSAC Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing \(AST\) - Hot Topics Webinar series 2024](#)

29 January 2024

[A CLL refresher with gems from ASH23 - The Evening Training Course](#)

31 January 2024

[What's New in Haematological Malignancies](#)

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

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