



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

RCPATH President's newsletter – December 2023



President's Message

A Call to Action

Sounds serious? It is...

Healthcare is struggling, Pathology is struggling, patients are struggling. Like never before we need the Pathology community to step up and work collectively and collaboratively at a level that allows a critical mass to become established that is potent, visible and effective in driving pathology services to the levels needed to facilitate wider, efficient, effective and appropriate healthcare strategies and patient pathways.

The wider UK economy remains challenging, and while huge investment is needed in healthcare, it is uncertain where that will come from in the near future. Reform by driving efficiency, defining contingencies, and making difficult prioritisation decisions must all be part of this, but there will be opportunities as well – we need to be ready and primed with the relevant data, arguments, evidence and visibility to strongly compete for the resources that may become available.

As the new incoming President, I will focus and prioritise College business towards workstreams that directly promote and facilitate the things that are most important to members – adequate and appropriate workforce, modern pathology services (equipment, estate, IT), promotion of staff wellbeing and professional respect – all of which are vital to ensure we have services to meet the future needs of healthcare and a workplace we can embrace and deliver this from. And no, we are not a trade



 [Twitter](#)

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 [Instagram](#)

union – but that does not mean that we shun everything that is associated with such territory. We will act robustly when the welfare of staff is compromised to an extent that patient care and healthcare suffers. We shall stand up to defend this.

Working with other pathology bodies and associations more collaboratively will further strengthen the voice of pathology, as will ongoing constructive engagement with the NHS and governments around the UK.

There is so much to do and the pathology community needs to work together for the sake of patients and healthcare. Our collective intellect, experience and insight can be so powerful when we reach the critical mass required. This is a call to action and I urge all College Fellows and trainees to step up like never before. Our healthcare system is at stake, our professions are at stake: **This College needs you** – my College....., your College....., our College needs you.

And for those who so far have not aligned to the College, and may not even see this message, then please pass it on – we need everyone.....

Research Fellowship Start-Up Grant launch

I am very pleased to see the College Research Committee launch a new Research Fellowship Start-Up Grant. Giving support to postgraduate and undergraduate students at the beginning of their research project for up to one year, the grants are available for any discipline of medical or veterinary pathology. Full details are available on the [website](#).

Engaging stakeholders

To mark World Antimicrobial Awareness week we shared our new [position statement on Antimicrobial Resistance](#). The statement focuses on how the College's medical microbiologist and virologist members are at the forefront of addressing AMR and the support and investment they need to tackle this threat to global health.

We welcomed the [Cancer Research UK manifesto](#) calling on the next government to prevent 20,000 cancer deaths every year by 2040. Pathology is central to meeting this target through early diagnosis, monitoring and screening, but the workforce crisis must be

addressed if we are to diagnose cancer earlier and reduce cancer deaths.

College colleagues attended the manifesto launch which was chaired by Sir Simon Stevens and featured a panel discussion with keynote speakers including Professor Sir Mike Richards, former Cancer Tsar and Chair of the UK National Screening Committee.

College Annual Report 2022 – 2023

The College's [annual report](#) has just been published. It covers how we invest in members and future pathologists, our campaigns to raise the profile of pathology, and how we work with members and the public to improve health outcomes around the world.

Pathology Portal

I was delighted to see the [Pathology Portal](#) win the Outstanding Innovation award at the [Healthcare Honours 2023](#).

A partnership between the College and [NHS England's Learning Hub](#), the Portal is a fantastic learning platform for trainees, practising pathologists, scientists and all those in pathology-linked roles

Season's greetings

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a very happy new year.

Dr Bernie Croal

President, The Royal College of Pathologists

X: [@BernieCroal](#)

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Working for members

College statement on the publication of medical examiner regulations

As lead medical royal college for medical examiners, the College welcomes the publication of the government [press release](#) and details of the upcoming [reforms to death certification](#), which are expected to be introduced from April 2024. The publication of the [draft regulations](#) is an important step towards full statutory implementation of the reforms, which will affect everyone involved in the certification, review and registration of deaths. For more information visit the [College website](#).

New digital format for The Bulletin

In January 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.

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](#).

UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs) now hosted on the College website

The College website is the new home of the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations (UK SMIs).

Working with the Standards Unit at the UK Health Security Agency and UK SMI Steering Committee, we have migrated the UK SMI documents from the www.gov.uk website to the College website. The new webpages have been designed to be user friendly, easy to navigate and functional. They also provide printable UK SMI documents in a PDF format. For more information [visit the UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations \(UK SMIs\) webpage](#)

Your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The College recommends that all members [participate in a suitable CPD programme](#) and we offer members a [CPD portfolio service](#) to support this.

The College's CPD portfolio provides access to an easy-to-use system for storing and cataloguing your CPD credits and the activities that you undertake to improve and enhance your practice. If you have any questions about CPD, please email: mycollege@rcpath.org, T: 020 7451 6720.

[The Pathology Portal](#)

The Pathology Portal now has 4,800 resources and has been accessed more than 95,000 times. The resources include a variety of cases, videos, podcasts, quizzes for assessing learning, and other relevant educational materials. They cater to the professional development needs of pathologists worldwide, with the userbase of the Portal reaching over 2,400 users.

The Pathology Portal has seen more contributors developing content across different specialties, including clinical biochemistry. The development of more resources is supported by new functionality allowing the Pathology Portal to produce certificates, more information about these certificates will become available as the content develops.

We appreciate your continued support and encourage you to provide feedback on your experience with the Pathology Portal. If you have any questions, suggestions, or believe you have content suitable for the platform, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at pathologyportal@rcpath.org.

Get involved at the College

Apply to be a CESR Assessor

If you are interested in becoming involved with the College, becoming a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) assessor is a good way to do so. The role of a CESR assessor is to determine whether or not each CESR applicant meets the standard for their specialty and either recommend applicants for entry to the Specialist Register or outline what more needs to be done to meet the standard. Training and ongoing support will be provided and CESR assessors can self-accredit for CPD points for each CESR evaluation they undertake.

A role description and further information are available on the [College website](#). If you would like to apply, please send an email outlining how you meet the person specification, along with an abbreviated CV, to training@rcpath.org.

International

The College will be at Medlab Middle East in Dubai February 2024

As a supporting body of Medlab Middle East we are excited to announce that from Monday 5 to Thursday 8 February 2024, President Dr Bernie Croal will attend the congress.

Dr Bernie Croal will deliver a keynote talk on the Laboratory Management track on Monday 5 February, titled the Appropriate utilisation of laboratory testing – strategies to ensure lab testing is focused and safe. Following this the College will host a workshop with talks, networking, and afternoon tea. Join us for the workshop If you are going to be at Medlab in Dubai email international@rcpath.org and will share more details with you about it when they are available.

Furthermore, College Fellows Dr Karin Denton will speak about cervical screening – is self-sampling the future? and Professor Walid Al-Wali will give a talk on the role of the clinical microbiology laboratory in diagnostic and antimicrobial stewardship.

You will also be able to visit us at the exhibition stand being hosted by the International Team. Find out more about the conference by going to the official website for [Medlab Middle East](#)

New publications

New publications

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

College courses

[Death Certification Reforms Legislation – implications for the Medical Examiner system VIRTUAL EVENT](#)

Wednesday, 17 January 2024

CPD credits: TBC

This information-sharing online event is aimed at anyone working in or with the medical examiner system in England and Wales and will cover the introduction of the statutory medical examiner system and the new death certification process from April 2024.

Topics to be covered include:

- The new Medical Certificates of Cause of Death
- Changes to cremation forms and the role of the Crematorium Medical Referee
- Implications for Medical Examiner offices
- Changes to death registration
- Changes to the role of the Coroner

The event is open to anyone working in the sector. There is a nominal £10 registration charge, with all other costs being covered by the Royal College of Pathologists.

It is anticipated that the draft regulations relating to the above reforms will be published by the end of 2023. Links to the regulations will be circulated to all delegates in advance of the meeting. In the unlikely event that the regulations are not published by January 17th, the meeting will be postponed.

[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.

[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. The event is relevant 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](#)

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

CPD credits: 6

[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

The Classification and Staging of Age-Related Pathology: recruiting subject experts to be working group members

The Classification and Staging of Age-Related Pathology project seeks to unify current research on the biology of ageing, by developing a comprehensive system for classifying and staging age-related pathology, to complement the WHO's International Classification of Diseases (ICD).

Ageing is not a pathological process, and chronological age is heterogeneous and does not equate to physiological age. It is vital that a classification and staging system is developed for age-related pathology, to better understand and meet the healthcare, workforce and economic needs of ageing populations.

We are seeking to establish 12 working groups to give feedback, guidance and consensus agreement on the classification and staging systems. The groups will meet (virtually and/ or in person) over the course of two years to give input to: Criteria for defining an age-related

pathology, Classification system of age-related pathology (i.e. which pathologies will be included for each system), Criteria for biomarkers/parameters to be used in staging, Biomarkers/parameters to be used to stage each pathology to be finalised, Staging system for age-related pathology.

For more information please email: Dr Emma Short, Consultant Histopathologist and Research Associate: Eshort@cardiffmet.ac.uk

Updated Lupus guideline in development

Work is underway by the British Society for Rheumatology (BSR) to update and significantly expand the clinical guideline for systemic lupus erythematosus. The update will include paediatric, adolescent and adult patients in a new whole life course approach.

The guideline working group have just published the [scope for the guideline](#) in *Rheumatology Advances in Practice*. As well as widening the population, the scope has also grown to now include lupus nephritis, where there has been the most significant developments in evidence. The guideline will cover diagnosis, assessment and monitoring and will be developed using the methods and rigorous processes outlined in 'Creating Clinical Guidelines: Our Protocol' by the BSR. Contact guidelines@rheumatology.org.uk for further information.

Other external events of interest

14-19 January 2024

[Genomics and Clinical Microbiology](#)

19 January 2024

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

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](#)

25-27 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](#)

06-07 February 2024

[GARDP & BSAC Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference \(ACC2024\)](#)

07 February 2024

[UK Haemato-Oncology Clinical Studies Group Trials Update Meeting](#)

18-23 February 2024

[Genomics and Clinical Virology](#)

27 February 2024

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

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](#)

