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Bulletin Editor

Our changing climate

By the time you read this, spring will have sprung and all will be lush and green. As I type this in February, however, it's still cold and grey. I mention this because the UK Department of Health and the Health Protection Agency have just published *Health Effects of Climate Change in the UK 2008: An update of the Department of Health Report 2001/2002*.¹

I've been interested in climate change ever since I worked in the Antarctic in 1990–1992, frying under the ozone hole during the summer and watching glaciers melt. So this report caught my eye. To give you a flavour of it: "Key areas for the NHS in adapting to climate change include: ... development of local 'Heatwave', 'Gale' and 'Flood' plans". But there's more, much more, and plenty with direct application to pathology.

Histopathologists will be interested to hear that a large increase in skin cancer and melanoma is predicted, due to more UV exposure and the increase in outdoor activities in the sunny weather. Haematologists and microbiologists may be intrigued to learn that there's a small chance of malaria returning to the UK. It was once common in the southeast of England and even in parts of Yorkshire. There are predictive maps which show that even Inverness could be at risk. It is no coincidence then that our stand at this year's **Chelsea Flower Show** (20–24 May) is a joint effort with the Health Protection Agency and the theme is climate change and the return of malaria to Britain. With the warmer weather, there is an increasing chance of more effective insect vectors joining us from mainland Europe. More ticks too – which means more Lyme disease. And longer warmer summers mean (oh no!) more midges in the Highlands. On the plus side, with warmer winters there will be far fewer winter-related deaths and thus less pneumonias. But warmer summers bring the risk of heatwaves and heat-related deaths. And up to 14000 more cases of food-poisoning each year. If you have time, have a look: it's an interesting and thought-provoking report.

Some of these climate effects are already apparent and some will take a while to manifest themselves. Much more imminent is **National Pathology Week** (3–9 November). In our new 'Public Engagement' section, we have included articles that may give you some ideas as to how you and your hospital can get involved.

Also heading our way is the new form of **revalidation and relicensure** for doctors in the UK. The medical Royal Colleges will be playing a large part.

Lance Sandle tells us all about what's coming in his article (p.139). This is essential reading for our UK medical consultant membership.

For a complete change, have a look at John Cooper's report of a seminar on **veterinary pathology** held in East Africa (p.129). I can also recommend the article on **sudden cardiac death in the young** (p.99) by Mary Sheppard, which particularly moved me.

There's plenty of other good content in this issue. And even some **controversy on the Letters page** over clinical attire: bare forearms and wrist as an attempt to prevent infection by improving hand hygiene and removing unnecessary dangly bits of never-laundered germ-infested cloth, aka the tie. As you can see from my mug shot above, I have abandoned the tie at work myself. And that's a short sleeve shirt, trust me.

Finally I'd like to ask for your help. I am thinking of putting **photographs of laboratories** on future covers. Outside views of the 'front door' or the building would be welcome. Modern and sleek, broken down and semi-derelict, I don't mind. People in the picture would be great. Be artistic if you like. Who works in the oldest building? Or the oldest original laboratory space? What's the worst view out of a member's office window – assuming you still have one? What's the best view? Find the lab camera or use your own and get snapping.

Send your pictures or comments to me at publications@rcpath.org, where they will be very gratefully received.

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Reference

1. Department of Health and Health Protection Agency. *Health effects of climate change in the UK 2008: An update of the Department of Health report 2001/2002*, 2008. www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_080702 (accessed 14 February 2008).