



Dr Suzy Lishman

National Pathology Week update

The first National Pathology Week will be held from 3–9 November 2008. Since the last update we have over 80 events planned nationwide, as well as a dedicated website and a lovely pink logo! It's still not too late to organise an event so please get in touch!

National events

Plans for National Pathology Week are coming on well, with over 80 events confirmed around the country. We know that there are lots more being planned, so please get in touch soon so that they can be included in the online programme. If you've been thinking about holding an event but haven't got round to finalising the arrangements, now's the time to book the venue and let us know before it's too late.

Website

The dedicated National Pathology Week website is now available at www.nationalpathologyweek.org. This website is separate from the main College site to focus on National Pathology Week and to present a more user-friendly face to the public. On the website there are resources for both pathologists organising events and for members of the public who want to know more about pathology. There is also a national programme of events, organised by region. The website is being constantly updated and there is much more to come.

Pathology presentations

One of the projects we are working on is the development of two presentations that can be downloaded from the website and adapted for local use. This will provide you with a choice of ready-made talks so you don't even have to write a new presentation to take part in a National Pathology Week event. The presentations will be as generic as possible so that they can be used by pathologists and scientists in any discipline, and for a wide range of audiences. We hope that you will adapt the presentations to include local information and images. The presentations can also be adapted to suit the audience, for example emphasising career opportunities and training for sixth-form students, future developments in pathology for a medical audience, or the role of pathology in the care of the living for members of the public. So have a look at the presentations on the website and think about whether you could use one at a grand round, postgraduate lecture, teaching session, educational meeting,

open day or to give a talk to a local school, Rotary Club or Women's Institute, for example.

Pathology myths and misconceptions

The first talk explores some of the myths and misconceptions that surround pathology. If you've ever been asked what you do, you'll know that the public perception of pathology is 'something to do with dead bodies'.

The College recently commissioned focus group studies in which teenagers, teachers and museum-goers were asked about their perceptions of pathology. The results confirmed what previous surveys and polls had demonstrated: that the public gain most of their information about pathology from the television and other media and that there is little understanding of the wide range of pathology specialties or the role of pathology in the care of living patients. The presentation that will be available uses information from this feedback to look at eight common misconceptions about pathology, for example:

- pathologists only work with the dead
- pathologists only work in labs
- pathology is boring and repetitive
- pathology isn't an essential part of the medical school curriculum.

With the use of quotes from the focus groups, statistics from the polls and striking images, this presentation explains the truth behind the myths and shows what pathology is really about.

Careers in pathology

The second presentation will be careers-related, providing general information about the main pathology specialties and the range of career opportunities in the different disciplines. More information about this will be available in the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Logo

You'll have seen the new College logo in the last *Bulletin*. National Pathology Week is using a pink version of the new logo, which will be displayed prominently on all promotional materials. Please

National Pathology
Week logo



National Pathology Week
3–9 November 2008

use the logo on any posters or leaflets that you might distribute during National Pathology Week. Information about how to download and use the logo will be sent to all participants. We have recently ordered promotional material to publicise the week. Packs of these items will be available free of charge for all of those registering events during National Pathology Week by the end of September.

Pathology: The movie

As part of the aim of National Pathology Week is to raise public awareness and understanding of pathology, I was particularly interested to see a new film called *Pathology* advertised recently. It was described as a horror film, so it was with some trepidation that I went to see it after work one evening. Luckily the ‘horror’ largely involved the demonstration of post mortems and organs, so I wasn’t too disturbed by that bit. I was less keen on the young pathologists murdering people to try and fool their colleagues with clever causes of death. This film did not show pathology in a good light and the College had a response ready for when the media contacted the press office for a comment. However, my experience of being one of only five people in the cinema

was obviously repeated across the country, as no one contacted us about the film and I understand that it ran for less than a week in most places.

It’s not too late to join in

Although we’ve had so many expressions of interest in holding events during National Pathology Week, please keep the ideas coming as it’s not too late to organise an event. In particular, could I encourage those who have committed to holding an event to send details to your Regional Council Chairman and to Caroline Shaw at the College (caroline.shaw@rcpath.org), so that the programme can be updated and the event can be categorised correctly.

I’d like to thank everyone who’s working on National Pathology Week and encourage you to keep the momentum going.

Please contact me if there is anything I can do to help with your event. We can supply promotional material, but unfortunately cannot provide any financial support for events, as our budget is limited. We have obtained enough sponsorship to ensure that we do not use any money from membership fees to finance the week – so apart from your time and commitment, this isn’t costing you anything!

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