

Veterinary Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee Newsletter – June 2021

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a very productive year for the Veterinary Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC), which organised a successful Summer School for trainees and launched a recruitment survey. We also further developed the webpage and guidelines for examinations, and saw growing participation in a number of activities, including the highly successful National Pathology week. We continued to champion veterinary pathology across a number of areas, including liaison with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and international colleges of pathology.

Our committee continues to represent all areas of our profession and we are pleased to have welcomed Dr Pamela Kelly (Curriculum Development Representative), Dr Ronnie Chamanza (Chair of the Veterinary Pathology Examiners) and Dr Lou Dawson (British Society of Veterinary Pathologists Representative). Sadly, we also said goodbye to Dr Jayne Wright, whom we thank, along with Dr Alastair Foote and Dr Vini Pintos, for their huge contribution to the Veterinary Pathology SAC.

Professor Roberto La Ragione FRCPath, Chair of the Veterinary Pathology SAC

Publications

Service spotlight: Veterinary pathology at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

In January, the Publishing & Digital team worked with Dr Simon Spiro, a wildlife veterinary pathologist at the Zoological Society of London, to publish a [service spotlight blog](#) on the College website in which Simon gives an overview of the different areas of veterinary pathology and the work he carries out alongside his team.



Simon Spiro with penguins at ZSL © Zoological Society of London (ZSL).

COVID-19 and lessons from the animals: a One Health approach

Professor Simon Priestnall's article on [COVID-19](#) and animals appeared in the January 2021 issue of the Bulletin, and calls for greater collaboration between veterinary and medical scientists.

Summer School for Residents

On Saturday 5 September 2020, the Royal College of Pathologists was delighted to host the inaugural RCPATH Veterinary Pathology Summer School for Residents. While COVID-19 scuppered our original plans for a face-to-face meeting and social events in London, the virtual format of the day did allow more than 60 attendees from various countries to take part.

The day started with an introduction by Professor Roberto La Ragione and Dr Jayne Wright. We then moved quickly on to general pathology lectures delivered by speakers who had recently sat the RCPATH exams.

All participants were then split into groups according to which exams they had taken – anatomical, clinical or microbiology. There was also time to discuss top tips for phase 1 and phase 2 of the exams, as well as the anatomical sub-species specialisms.

The day was a resounding success and we are grateful to the speakers for giving up their Saturday. Special thanks also to Professor Roberto La Ragione, Dr Jayne Wright, Kristen Pontello and other members of the Trainee Advisory Committee for their joint efforts in the organisation of the event. We hope this will become a yearly event and, once it is safe to meet face to face, that it will also include social and networking events.

Veterinary Pathology Quiz

On Friday 6 November 2020, as part of National Pathology Week, the College ran a virtual veterinary pathology 'pub quiz' for around 40 veterinary undergraduate students. Hosts Professor Roberto La Ragione, Dr Simon Spiro and Dr Kate English represented the three main areas in veterinary pathology and provided a range of thought-provoking and entertaining questions. The winning team received a £100 voucher. The best quiz team name went to 'Mighty-chondria'. Feedback from those who attended was very positive.

Pathology Portal Update

As reported at the beginning of 2020, the College, in partnership with Health Education England, is developing Pathology Portal (formerly Digital Now), a national online platform designed to deliver enhanced pathology training for specialists and trainees.

The platform will provide access to a range of learning materials, with the first module covering digital histopathology. Future developments specific to other specialties are also planned.

Pathology Portal will be particularly relevant for veterinary pathology Fellows and trainees, as it will enable universal access, through College membership, to a broad range of case materials involving digital veterinary histopathology.

The system will allow for model histological descriptions and other relevant media to be added to each case file, creating an online database that will be particularly useful for examination preparation.

While the final framework of the histopathology platform is still in development, it is hoped this will be ready for release this summer.

For the original report on this platform, click on the link below:

<https://www.rcpath.org/discover-pathology/news/digital-now.html>

Veterinary Pathology Employment Survey



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

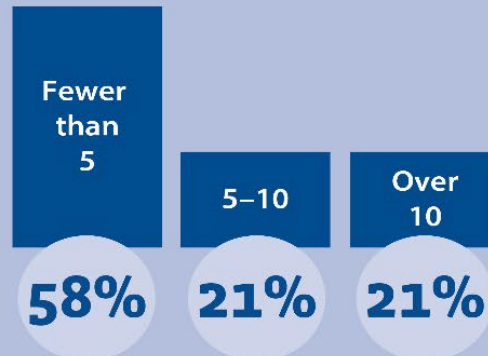
Meeting Pathology Demand: Veterinary pathology recruitment



80%

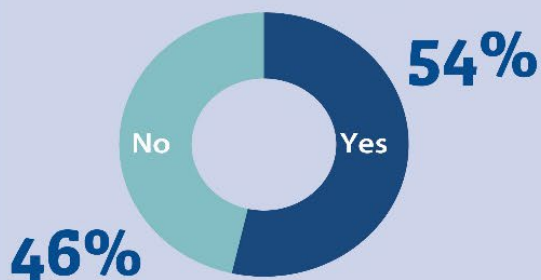
The percentage of organisations that responded to the workforce survey

Veterinary pathologists in posts



How many veterinary pathologists are employed by your organisation?

Anatomical pathology



Have you tried to recruit an anatomical veterinary pathologist?



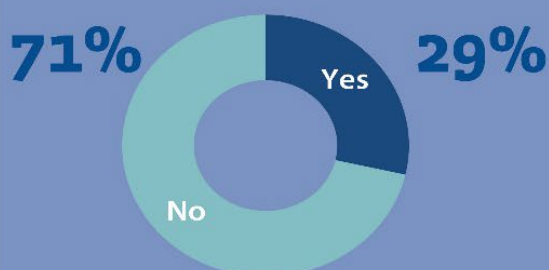
87%
successfully recruited

Applicants per job post



2.7

Clinical pathology



Have you tried to recruit a clinical veterinary pathologist?



75%
successfully recruited

Applicants per job post



2.4

Find out more about our workforce research: www.rcpath.org/profession/workforce-planning

Exam results

Spring/Autumn 2020 Veterinary Pathology Exams

There were no Part 2 examinations in Veterinary Pathology in 2020, (including the deferral of the entire Spring session), but for 2021 we are seeking guidance from the College for social distanced Part 2 examinations, considering we have received a few inquiries from potential part 2 candidates. A few changes to the examination format that are coming into effect in 2021 include, no choice of questions in the Part 1 examination for both the essay and the short answer questions (SAQs). Candidates will have to attempt all 3 essay questions and 3 SAQs. For the Part 2 examination, the main change in 2021 is the phasing out of the necropsy component of the examination, which will be replaced by a workplace-based assessment (WBA). The examination board is also exploring other ways of conducting some segments of the examination, such as macroscopic spots, virtually using digital images/photos or other online formats, with an overall objective of making examinations more online and remote-based.

Laboratory Animals

Three candidates sat the FRCPath Part 1 examination in Veterinary Pathology, subspecialty Laboratory Animals, in Autumn of 2020. Two passed and one failed, giving a pass rate of 67%. The examination was carried out remotely online via TestReach software system. TestReach who are already working with other Colleges will also be used for the 2021 examinations. Congratulations to the successful candidates.

British Society of Veterinary Pathologists Annual Meeting

On 9–10 October 2020, the British Society of Veterinary Pathologists Annual Meeting – A Holistic Approach to the Diagnosis of Lymphoma – was held online. This was the first time the society had attempted a virtual meeting and, thankfully, all went without a hitch.

Our thanks go to our partners at the Webinar Vet for their valuable expertise. A huge amount of gratitude must also go to our generous event sponsors, IDEXX Laboratories UK and NationWide Laboratories.

During the two-day conference, we heard from several key opinion leaders in the field of diagnostics. Dr Butty Villiers from Dick White Referrals gave two very detailed lectures on cytology and flow cytometry. Professor Amy Durham from the University of Pennsylvania covered the World Health Organization system for lymphoma diagnosis, as well as splenic masses in dogs, some specific lymphomas we see in cats, and a fantastic mystery slide session with much discussion of some interesting common and more unusual cases.

Complementing these lectures, Dr Bridget Wilkins, a consultant histopathologist with a wealth of experience in the field, gave an overview of human lymphoma diagnostics. There was much discussion on comparative aspects throughout the whole meeting.

To help put everything into context, we also heard an update on treatment of canine lymphoma from Dr Ana Lara Garcia of IDEXX Laboratories. Dr Mark Stidworthy from IZVG Pathology discussed lymphoma and lymphoproliferative disease in exotic and wildlife species. Dr Suzanne Turner gave a fascinating talk on some of her basic science research into anaplastic large cell lymphoma in children, including in some mouse models.

Other events included Dr Mark Wessels' webinar on Cetacean Morbillivirus Encephalitis, and multiple-choice sessions on clinical pathology and laboratory animal pathology for current residents in training. Thanks to Dr Hannah Wong and her colleagues for their hard work in preparing these sessions, which were very popular amongst trainees.

Conferences

[Annual Conference Online 2021 | Microbiology Society](#)

[One Health EJP Annual Scientific Meeting 2021 \(ohejp2021.com\)](#)

[British Society of Veterinary Pathology – Events \(bsvp.org\)](#)

Surveillance

Veterinary pathologists supporting the food industry, wildlife and welfare have been designated as key workers and kept busy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Some veterinary laboratories have also been providing COVID testing for the NHS.

Cambridge Veterinary School has joined Aberystwyth University and the veterinary schools at Bristol, Liverpool, London and Surrey as partner providers for the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) *post-mortem* examination service in England and Wales.

In Scotland, there was an initial fall in submissions for post-mortem examinations following a reduction in the number of food animal post-mortem centres from eight to four in the first half of 2019. However, submission numbers steadily climbed throughout 2020, based on a month-by-month comparison with 2019. By the last quarter of 2020, submission numbers had returned to 94% of those seen in 2019.

The UK is currently in the grip of two pandemics but outside the veterinary world the avian influenza pandemic very much plays second fiddle to COVID-19. Avian influenza, which threatens domestic birds and the food production industry, is still being recorded in wild birds throughout the UK.

Sampling is carried out at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and on birds submitted following reports from members of the public at APHA surveillance centres, and on specified species of birds submitted for forensic post-mortem examination.

In Great Britain, the total up to 20 January 2021 stands at **299 H5 positive** findings in **68 locations, across 41 counties** and in **25 species**:

H5N1	10
H5N5	6
H5N8	274
H5Nx	9

Source: F Howie 4/2/21

If you have any feedback on this newsletter, or suggestions for items or College activities you wish to learn more about, please contact Alison Morgan, Governance and Committee Services Officer at: alison.morgan@rcpath.org. Please title your email 'Vet Path News'.