



## **Pathology Informatics Committee**

A meeting was held on 10 May 2023 at 14:00  
hosted by the Royal College of Pathologists via Microsoft Teams

**Dr Lance Sandle**  
**Registrar**

**Present:** Dr Laszlo Igali, Chair  
Mr Robert Simpson, IBMS & Chair PSGB  
Mr Stuart Jones, Technical Lead, LabTest Online  
Dr Mark Sleeman, Clinical Biochemistry & ACB representative  
Dr Owen Johnson, Director, X-Lab  
Dr Lance Sandle, RCPATH Registrar  
Dr Bernie Croal, Scotland Representative  
Dr Anu Gunavardhan, Wales Representative

**In attendance:** Miss Louise Mair, Governance and Committee Services Officer

**Apologies:** Dr Darren Treanor, Histopathology Representative  
Dr Gail Norbury, Genetics Representative  
Dr Malur Sudhanva, Microbiology  
Dr Michael McKenna, Northern Ireland representative  
Mr Craig Webster, Association for Clinical Biochemistry  
Mr Jamie West, IBMS Representative  
Prof Simon Cross, Histopathology; RCPATH E-learning Lead

### **Minutes (unconfirmed)**

#### **PIC.15/23 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were noted above. The Chair advised that Dr Charlotte Syme, Clinical Biochemistry representative has demitted from the Committee and expressed thanks for her valuable contributions.

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **PIC.16/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting, Actions, Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 were approved as a correct record.

The action tracker was reviewed and following updates to the action log were noted:



**PIC.03/21bii:** Dr Kell to reach out to his colleague, if no progress made then will reach out to the Transfusion Medicine SAC Committee Chair. Action to remain open.

**PIC.10/21:** Members to consider subject and content for zoom conference e-learning events and feedback to the Chair. Action to remain open.

**PIC.12/21:** Chair to approach some relevant parties to organise some LIMS learning events. Action to remain open.

**PIC.38/21:** Chair to invite Dr Sandle, Dr Jones and Dr Berenice Lopez to the next meeting of the PRSB to discuss Results Direct to Patients. There has not been any progress with this, but Dr Kell did offer to speak to a contact at the Royal College of General Practitioners and try to get this actioned. Action to remain open.

**PIC.43/21:** Members to contact Dr Johnson with any ideas on a potential symposium on how artificial intelligence will shape the pathology landscape in the next 5-10 years. Dr Johnson advised that he would draft a position statement on this before the next meeting, action to remain open.

**PIC.18/22:** Committee members to forward suggestions around a coordinated approach to gathering data on digital and AI capabilities from the college's different pathology departments. Action to remain open.

**PIC.19/22:** The Chair to contact individuals from the clinical networks to see if there is an appetite to create a team to work on a unified test list. Action to remain open.

**PIC.36/22c:** Mr Orton to provide the Committee with the staff member email who is leading on diabetes point of care. This action to remain open and dependent on Mr Harris attending and providing an update.

**PIC.36/22f:** The Chair and Mr Orton to follow up on college support for endorsement of standards for consultation and then will be reviewed by the college and give provisional endorsement. This action to remain open and dependent on Mr Harris attending and providing an update.

**PIC.44/22b:** The Chair to review where the committee could add value to discussions on AI in pathology and how to manage possible risk areas e.g., bias, across the disciplines and whether this should be included on the work plan for review by the committee. This action relates to action **PIC.43/22**, Prof Cross advised that he would review the RCPATH digital pathology AI statement around elimination of bias. This action to remain open.

**PIC.10/23:** The Governance and Committees Services Officer to invite Dr Anu Gunavardhan, the new Chair of the Wales Regional Council to the Pathology Informatics Committee meetings. This action has been completed and can be removed.

## **PIC.17/23 Governance**

- (a) Workplan – The Committee agreed that the current work plan covers the main areas of interest for this group. The Chair added that the Committee should attempt to develop a pathway between NHS Digital and the College to co-badge guidance, such as units of measure in the future.

**PIC.18/23 NPEx and OpenPathology**

There was no update in the absence of Andy Harris.

**PIC.19/23 Pathology Catalogues/Standardisation Updates**

**(a) NHS Digital**

The Chair advised there has been significant changes to the NHS Digital structure, with both Matt Watson and Richard Haigh taking voluntary redundancies. Therefore, NHS Digital will now need to re-prioritise which work they will support and ambitious plans, such as coding standardisation will need to be postponed. The Committee agreed it will be difficult to find replacements as both individuals had a long history with RCPATH and were extremely passionate in their support for the college.

**(b) Pathology Informatics National User Group (PINUG)**

The Chair advised that he attended a PINUG meeting in March, the committee was pleased to hear that units of measure was discussed and encouraged that PINUG are supportive around implementing units of measure. The Chair presented a brief PowerPoint slide on highlights of units of measure to the committee, notably, the majority felt the main issue was lack of consistency and lack of central design for units of measure and difficulty with consolidating existing data. The Chair agreed to share the minutes of the March PINUG meeting with the Committee.

**Action: The Governance and Committees Services Officer to circulate the PINUG meeting minutes to the Committee for information.**

**(c) Professional Records Standards Board (PRSB)**

The Chair has not attended the most recent meeting but highlighted the value in inviting a representative from PRSB to join these meetings.

**(d) Carter/NHSI – Lists of tests/networks update**

The Chair did not have anything to report for this item.

**(e) SNOMED CT Synoptic Reporting**

The Chair advised that he attended a SNOMED meeting in April, which discussed cellular pathology results and standardising data sets, with members in agreement that the profession needs to be economical around data sets and ensuring that the college data sets are aligned. The Chair has contacted the CAP (Canadian and American Pathologists) around their synoptic reporting data sets, as they have a large robust system in comparison to the UK and are able to support the UK's editorial process and link the synoptic data. The Committee noted that many UK hospitals have American based EPR systems which can download the CAP, therefore there is already a precedent in implementing these systems in the UK.

The Committee discussed the proposal to provide vendors with a link to data sets that are filled in from pathologists, the data feed would then give data to national registries, which is a cost-effective approach and would ensure that everyone has the same data set. This proposal is postponed due to the NHS Digital restructure but is a proposal for the future and one that NHS Digital has previously agreed in principle.

**(f) Pathology Standards Governance Board**

Given the recent structural and staff changes to the NHS Digital team, Mr Simpson advised that PSGB is in the process of reviewing their current roadmaps and funding, which has meant some work has been postponed. Another priority for the PSGB is looking at the overlap between its remit and other groups, particularly with the diagnostic digital capability programme in England, to ensure that governance is aligned.

Mr Simpson advised that the PSGB also plans to reissue the ISN that was issued in England because they felt that whilst it was useful to have, it is unlikely to drive the implementation or ensure that suppliers are fully mapped onto the necessary things to adopt UTL or units of measure. Mr Sleeman discussed the difficulties of implementing the UTL and advised that the upcoming pilot should highlight areas of concerns that need to be dealt with before it is implemented. Mr Sleeman also raised the issue around the challenges LIMS will face in processing results at high rates, whilst maintaining metrological purity, which will need to be addressed before it is launched. The Committee agreed that LIMS will only be beneficial if it can add value and provide a platform that can continue to evolve and progress.

Mr Simpson highlighted that PSGB has been unsuccessful in attempting to appoint a Northern Ireland Representative and asked the Committee to contact him if they knew of any suitable candidates.

The Committee noted that with changes to PEQUOD and histopathology reporting, one of the strands is for coding for histopathology and cellular pathology work. Mr Simpson encouraged the Committee to provide feedback when this coding is developed.

**PIC.20/23 Results direct to patient**

Dr Croal reiterated previous concerns around the increased pressure placed on GPs dealing with direct to patient results, with no current guidance on how to effectively interpret raw pathology data and treat patients. Dr Croal and the College are continuing to raise this issue with the Government and NHS England.

**PIC.21/23 Digital Pathology**

The Committee noted the minutes from the Digital Pathology Committee held on 1 March 2022.

**PIC.22/23 eLearning**

There was no update in the absence of Prof Cross, The Chair encouraged members to contribute to the pathology portal.

**PIC.23/23 LIMS**

Dr Croal advised that the implementation of the citadel LIMS system in Scotland is slightly behind schedule, due to some issues / barriers around ILFT algorithms, with tremendous effort being put in from health boards to establish common coding.

Dr Croal raised concerns around the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill which is going through Parliament, if the bill is passed it would erase research and require consent for each digital image for each patient, which would place immense pressure on pathologists and raise the question of handling existing data. Dr Croal and the College have been meeting with the IBMS president and CEO to discuss possible solutions, in the meantime the College will continue to raise concerns and attempt to have some influence on the outcome of this.

**PIC.24/23 Update from the Devolved Nations**

**(a) England**

The Chair has covered this item throughout the meeting.

**(b) Northern Ireland**

There was no update in the absence of Dr McKenna.

**(c) Scotland**

Dr Croal has covered this item under the LIMS item.

**(d) Wales**

Dr Gunavardhan advised that Wales is in Phase 2 of its digital pathology implementation for all health boards. There has been some progress with funded projects for digital pathology and AI, with North Wales using digital slides exclusively for prostate. Swansea is also exclusively using digital slides for prostate and breast biopsies. The Committee noted that all breast biopsies in North Wales are digitally reported with the help of AI and all the lymphoma cases are digitised. There is currently only one pathologist who reports all cases digitally and works from home. The Committee agreed that to maintain this level of success will require funding and a business case for additional funding is currently going through the Welsh government to sustain all digital services.

The Committee noted that Wales are still at the procurement stage for LIMS, Dr Gunavardhan will continue to keep the Committee informed of any developments or confirmation of the successful vendor.

**PIC.25/23 Academic Activities**

The Committee discussed ways of promoting pathology informatics and considered the possibility of the College hosting an in-person event. Dr Croal highlighted that it may be easier to arrange an online symposium due to budget constraints but suggested that exploring sponsorship or looking at external venues outside of London, to reduce costs could be viable options. The Committee agreed to discuss this further.

**PIC.26/23 Environmental Sustainability**

Members were encouraged to consider how environmental sustainability can be improved and considered in laboratory practices.

**PIC.27/23 Any Other Business**

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded.

**PIC.28/23 Dates of Future Meetings**

Wednesday 4 October at 11.00am