

# Introducing our theme: Prevention and screening

Bulletin Editor, Professor Angharad Davies, introduces this issue's theme.

**Published:** 16 October 2025

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**Read time:** 4 Mins

**Shockingly, the gap in healthy life expectancy between rich and poor in the UK is growing. The government's stated goal is to halve that gap, while increasing healthy life expectancy for everyone, by increasing the focus on disease prevention – 1 of the 3 shifts of the NHS 10-Year Health Plan. In this issue, we explore the vital role pathology plays in prevention and screening, with examples from across our specialties.**

One of the great prevention success stories over recent decades has undoubtedly been in the field of cervical cancer. We feature 2 articles on this topic. The first, from gynaecological pathologist Dr Duaa Saeed-Chesterman, outlines the [development of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme](#) and its success in reducing cervical cancer rates, as well as the plans to harness emerging technologies, like molecular triage and digital pathology, to work towards NHS England's target of eradicating cervical cancer by 2040. The second article on this topic is from [statistical epidemiologist Dr Claire Gilham](#), and examines further how screening, improved testing and vaccination strategies are having a transformative effect on HPV and cervical cancer rates.

Turning to men's health, [Dr Aiman Haider reflects](#) on the College response to the Men's Health Strategy for England and the crucial role of histopathologists in delivering this. Dr Haider highlights some of the recent studies that have influenced change for the benefit of men's health, particularly in prostate cancer.

For many years, the mainstays of neonatal screening have comprised the neonatal blood spot test, which screens for just 9 conditions, along with neonatal hearing testing and the physical examination. The Generation Study will evaluate genome sequencing to screen newborn babies for more than 200 treatable rare conditions. Universal genome sequencing at birth, if implemented, would represent one of the biggest shifts within healthcare for decades. [David Bick provides an update](#) on Genomics England's research.

Microbiome research is a rapidly expanding area that offers a promising avenue for tackling antimicrobial resistance, one of today's great medical challenges. [Dr Blair Merrick explains](#) how therapies involving the gut microbiome, including faecal microbiota transplant, dietary interventions and phages, can be used to suppress the expansion of antimicrobial-resistant pathogens. Staying with infection, after many decades of slow progress, the development of effective vaccines for malaria and other novel approaches have at last been bringing new hope; [Dr Owain Donnelly reviews the latest developments](#).

The UK Fatal Anaphylaxis Registry collects data on fatal anaphylaxis reactions – how can this be used to prevent further deaths? [Immunologists Drs Tomaz Garcez, Cassandra Shilladay and Vibha Sharma consider](#) how the registry can help identify ways to improve care and prevent fatal reactions. Key themes include communication, patient awareness and unrecognised symptoms

Finally, veterinary pathologist [Dr Fabian Lean and virologist Professor Sharon Brookes report](#) on avian influenza viruses, explaining how they spread among birds and transmit to humans and other animals, leading to significant economic and health impacts. They also explain how surveillance can help to control and potentially eliminate bird flu altogether.

I hope you find this collection of articles and expert opinion as interesting and useful as I did. The College will be urging policymakers to recognise the huge value of pathologists of all specialties in helping the NHS to achieve the commitments of the 10-year plan at its parliamentary event next month – more on this in the next issue of the Bulletin.

## Meet the author



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### **October 2025 Bulletin**

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