



The Royal College of **Pathologists**

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Digital Pathology Committee

A meeting was held on Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 10.00
hosted by the Royal College of Pathologists via Microsoft Teams

Dr Lance Sandle
Registrar

Present:

Prof Darren Treanor, Chair
Dr Muhammad Aslam, Pathologist, Wales
Prof David Snead
Dr Samar Betmouni, Neuropathology representative
Dr Bethany Williams, Digital Pathology Fellow, Leeds
Prof Claire Verrill
Mr Ashley Ballard, IBMS
Dr Paul Barrett, Histopathology representative
Dr Dilek Taze, Trainee Advisory Committee Representative
Dr David Shelton, Consultant Cytopathologist and Cytopathology
SC Representative
Prof Sarah Coupland, Vice President Communications

In attendance:

Richard Smith, Head of Professional Practice
Louise Mair, Governance and Committee Services Officer

Apologies:

Joanne Brinklow, Director of Learning
Prof Roberto La Ragione, Veterinary Pathology SAC Chair
Dr Gareth Bryson, Consultant Pathologist, Scotland
Prof Simon Cross, Consultant Histopathologist, Sheffield





	Minutes (unconfirmed)
DP1.14/23	Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest
a)	The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, especially Dr Taze, who joined as the TAC representative. Apologies for absence were noted and recorded above.
b)	There were no new declarations of interest received.
DP1.15/23	Minutes of the last meeting, Actions, Matters Arising
a)	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were approved as a correct record.
b)	<p>The following updates to the action log were noted:</p> <p>DP1.04/22b: Committee members to let the Governance and Committee Services Officer know if they want to lead or join the sub-group for the DP/AI curriculum and come up with recommendations by the next DP meeting. Since the last meeting, Dr Betmouni has volunteered to join the sub-group, therefore the action can be closed.</p> <p>DP1.08/22: Dr Williams to make a proposal for The Committee to review at the November DP meeting. Action to remain open.</p> <p>DP1.28/22m: Ms Brinklow and Dr Aslam to provide updates from the histopathology subgroup to the Dig Path committee meeting in March. Ms Brinklow and Dr Aslam advised that there is a meeting scheduled for March around this and will be able to provide an update at the next Digital Pathology Committee meeting. Action can be closed.</p> <p>DP1.29/22: Dr Betmouni to support with trainee surveys around experiences and attitudes to digital and digital examinations and to discuss this further with Dr Bryson. Dr Betmouni and Dr Bryson are currently drafting a survey for trainees and will provide an update on this to the Committee. Action to remain open.</p> <p>DP1.04/23: Prof La Ragione offered to provide an update at the next meeting on the case study findings published on sarcomas in dogs. Prof La Ragione sent links to the case studies following the meeting and were included in the March minutes.</p> <p>DP1.05/23: Ms Brinklow and Mr Smith to liaise with the events team on Thursday in the office and bring some options to Dr Bryson by the end of this week to decide whether to go ahead with the event or not. This action has been completed and can be closed.</p>



	<p>There was a discussion around whether histopathology trainees training with digital slides will need to be validated to use digital and whether they will be required to use glass slides for examinations. Currently, the guidance on this is unclear and the Committee noted that many trainees are using both digital and glass slides. Dr Betmouni will gain a better insight into how many trainees are using digital slides from the trainee survey she will be sending shortly, which asks about trainee current usage. This may also strengthen the case to digitalise the histopathology FRCPath examinations. To ensure inclusivity and representation, Dr Betmouni will look to add international trainees and cytopathology and create a parallel survey for IBMS trainees.</p>
DP1.16/23	Governance
	<p>The Chair asked the Committee to send any suggestions around additions to the workplan to the Governance and Committees Services Officer.</p>
DP1.17/23	Events
	<p>The Governance and Committees Services Officer provided a verbal update from Dr Bryson on the Digital Pathology Symposium which was recently held by the College. The Committee noted there were some technical challenges, but agreed it was a successful event, with over 60 attendees in person and 40-50 attendees online.</p> <p>Dr Betmouni commended Dr Bryson and the College events teams for their hard work in organising the symposium, noting the content was well balanced and received fantastic feedback from trainees who expressed how digital pathology has had a positive impact on their careers. Dr Verrill also received praise for her inspiring talk, where she encouraged trainees to get involved with digital pathology.</p> <p>The Committee discussed potentially including the highlights from the symposium in the next Bulletin. Dr Betmouni advised that she would speak to Dr Bryson about this after the meeting to take forward.</p> <p>Action: Dr Betmouni and Dr Bryson to potentially add highlights from the digital pathology symposium to the next college bulletin.</p> <p>Prof Coupland advised that the College have agreed for each speciality to book a free room for a symposium on an annual basis, the Committee were pleased to hear this and agreed to explore further, particularly if it could mean an annual symposium.</p> <p>Action Prof Coupland to send email about booking a room for symposium at the college to the Chair.</p> <p>Dr Williams suggested a Committee representative attending different committee meetings or college events and providing some digital pathology content to support integrating the specialty into pathology as a whole. The Chair and Mr Smith agreed they could liaise with the events</p>

	<p>team and see if anyone from the committee can join any upcoming events.</p> <p>The Chair added that although it is the college's mission to promote digital pathology more widely and the commercial events have excellent content, he felt that the College should prioritize and promote its own events over commercial ones. Recently a commercial event and college event had been held on the same day, but the Chair had noticed the commercial event was promoted more widely. There was a discussion around this, and the Committee agreed that ultimately, it is the College's mission to promote digital pathology to a wider audience, whether that be through commercial or college events. Mr Smith agreed he would consider this feedback further after the meeting and Prof Coupland agreed to speak to the Trustee Board around college events not being as widely promoted as commercial events.</p>
DP1.18/23	Update on NIHR HTA trial for digital pathology in screening
	<p>Dr Snead provided a presentation on the results from the NIHR HTA trial for digital pathology in screening to the Committee, advising that it is a multi-site study looking at the validation of digital pathology and presenting it on behalf of the entire group who took part in this study and it was funded by the National Institute of Health Research. The study concluded that digital slides exceeded the target 98.3% in breast, GI, skin and renal specialties, and also in the pool of breast and GI screening cases. The Committee commended Dr Snead's tremendous work.</p> <p>Prof Coupland queried how the results compared to similar European studies. Dr Snead advised that the results were comparable to other studies, it was a rigorous study, with pathologists who were fully trained on equipment and there were also had clinicians available to advise on whether there were significant results.</p> <p>Dr Aslam queried whether any microcalcifications were identified in breast screening. Dr Snead confirmed that they had found calcification but it did not appear to be a factor in the results.</p> <p>Dr Snead advised he has worked closely with Public Health England on this study and received support from Sarah Pinder, an independent arbitrator, the study has been through a commissioned review from NIHR as well as a second peer review, and Dr Snead advised there should be sufficient data for Public Health England to make a decision on using digital pathology for cancer cases.</p> <p>Dr Snead will keep the Committee updated on whether the report is accepted by Public Health England and subsequently published.</p>
DP1.19/23	Reporting of digital pathology cases from outside the UK
	There was no update in the absence of Prof Cross, it was agreed this item can be added to the next meeting agenda.
DP1.20/23	Examinations, curriculum, and training

	<p>Dr Aslam advised that he has met some of the examiners from the RCR (Royal College of Radiologists) and reviewed how they conduct their examination to learn some lessons from their experience. The RCR part 2 examination is similar to their part 1 examination and RCR has hired workstations within the centres.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that adopting this approach would increase exam fees when trainees already feel that exam fees are expensive. One cheaper alternative may be to utilise the image academies of RCR to RCPATH exams Radiologists to the exams, but this would be dependent on approval and system compatibility.</p> <p>Dr Snead highlighted a previous report on examination structure by Dr Aslam and asked if there had been any progress or follow up since the report was disseminated. The Chair agreed to contact Prof Angharad Davies, The Vice President for Learning to discuss the report further.</p> <p>Action: The Governance and Committees Services Officer to share Prof Angharad Davies email address with the Chair, so that he can discuss the examination report that Dr Aslam created.</p> <p>Dr Betmouni asked whether the exam committee are striving to replicate existing digitised exams, or to reconfigure / restructure the exams. Dr Aslam advised that the group still had not decided that whether this would be simply replacing microscope with an image or changing the examination pattern, however it is likely they are striving to undertake an examination restructure.</p> <p>There was a discussion around driving the digitisation of the exams but not wanting to apply additional pressure to the exams team and needing to consider GMC requirements and mapping it closely to the curriculum. However, the Committee agreed it does not want digital pathology to fall behind. There were suggestions around adding a mini assessment / module and whether imaging training academies could be a viable option, as there are many centres across the country. IBMS are also in the early process of adopting a digital pathology curriculum and could potentially collaborate with them.</p>
DP1.21/23	Environmental Sustainability
	<p>The Chair suggested asking Pathologist, Jamie Wilson to attend the next Dig Path meeting to provide a ten-minute overview on environmental sustainability for pathology. Dr Samar advised that he provided an engaging and comprehensive talk at the recent digital pathology symposium and would be helpful to hear his ideas. Dr Samar was particularly struck by how much water is extracted to support digital servers and might be enlightening for the group.</p> <p>Action: Dr Betmouni to introduce the Chair to Jamie Wilson via email and ask if he could attend the October meeting to provide a presentation on environmental sustainability within digital pathology.</p>

DP1.22/23	Updates from External Representatives
a)	NHSX
	There was no update in the absence of an NHSX representative.
b)	Institute of Biomedical Science (Ashley Ballard)
	Mr Ballard reported that a new head of digital education has been appointed, named Dr Jim Taylor, who is focussing primarily on the IBMS digital strategy. The Committee noted that IBMS are considering digitizing some of its training portfolios for registration and specialist IBMS staff.
	Mr Ballard advised that IBMS is looking at how it approaches its training and examination for the reporting programme and welcomed advice on how the College is proceeding with its RCPATH examinations and how this could feed into the IBMS training. Mr Ballard confirmed that around 10-20 students are going through the reporting and training.
c)	NHS Improvement (Jane Mills)
	There was no update provided in the absence of Jane Mills.
d)	NHS Digital (Robert Longstaff)
	There was no update provided in the absence of Robert Longstaff.
e)	Public Health England (Anne Mackie)
	There was no update provided in the absence of Anne Mackie.
DP1.23/23	Any Other Business
	Dr Aslam queried the College's AI Policy, as a few colleagues have been asked to add disclaimers around using AI in their diagnostic reports. The Committee agreed that if a laboratory is validated for digital pathology and ISO accredited, they shouldn't need to provide a disclaimer in reports. However, Prof Verrill advised that her department adds a specific statement around AI to their reports. The Chair asked if she would share the wording used for her disclaimer.
	Action: Prof Verrill to share her departments AI disclaimer with the Committee.
	The Chair discussed potentially contacting UKAS to discuss the College's stance on AI disclaimers in reports, and possibly liaising with Alyson Bryant, Head of Cellular Pathology Inspection.
DP1.24/23	Dates of Future Meetings
	Wednesday 18 October 2023, 10.00.
	The meeting closed at 11.48am.