

**Joint Medical Microbiology and Medical Virology Specialty Advisory Committee**

A meeting was held on Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 10:30am  
Via Microsoft Teams

- Present:**
- Dr Natasha Ratnaraja, Chair & British Infection Association, BIA
  - Dr Gayti Morris, Healthcare Infection Society
  - Dr Noha El Sakka, Scottish Microbiology and Virology Network
  - Dr Marina Morgan, Association of Clinical Pathologists
  - Dr Isobel Ramsey, Trainee Representative (Microbiology)
  - Dr Riina Rautemaa-Richardson, Oral Microbiology
  - Dr Jaisi Sinha, Welsh Representative
  - Dr Kirsty Dodgson, Association of Clinical Biochemists
  - Dr Stephen Winchester, Academic Activities
  - Dr Kate Templeton, Clinical Science / Higher Specialist Scientific Training representative
  - Dr Nicholas Brown, The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy
  - Dr Silke Schelenz, British Society for Medical Mycology, UK Clinical Mycology Network
- In attendance:**
- Karen Wellings, Corporate Administration Manager
  - Prof Angharad Davies, Vice-President of Learning
- Apologies:**
- Dr Angel Boulos, Northern Ireland representative
  - Dr Malur Sudhanva, Chair of the Panel of Virology Examiners
  - Dr Sophie Gillett, Clinical Virology Network

**Minutes (unconfirmed)**

**MMM.V.01/23 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above. The SAC noted that Corporate Administration Manager, Karen Wellings would be recording the meeting, in Louise Mair's absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

**MMM.V.02/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting, Actions, Matters Arising**

- (a) The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
- (b) The following updates to the action log were noted:



**MMMV.16/22i Chair to request Dr Templeton and Dr Dodgson to supply information on consultant clinical scientist appraisal process for the College website.** The Chair clarified that this action was around consultant clinical competencies, which is distinct from the appraisal process. The Chair advised she has amended the BIA document on competencies and will circulate the document to the SAC for review before sending to UKAS for approval.

**MMMV.16/22ii Members to contribute to FAQs for overseas doctors on College website.** Prof Davies advised there is an international trainee's support scheme on the RCPATH website that informs doctors about specific ITSS, which provides support and training to international doctors and scientists who want to take part in college exams. Additionally, there are international medical graduates links around training in the UK, a sponsorship scheme and a refugee scheme.

Prof Davies advised she would send the links to the SAC and advised them to send any specific questions not included on the website to the RCPATH international department.

**MMMV.16/22iii Clarify the use of fully trained microbiologists with dental background so that they will be considered for appropriate roles.** This action to remain open and discussed later under Dr Rautemaa-Richardson's update item on the agenda.

#### **MMMV.18/22 Clinical Effectiveness**

**(a)** No topics for RCPATH clinical audit templates were raised. Members were encouraged to consider topics and raise via the template. A query was raised on whether Dr Morgan is still the audit representative on the SAC. It was agreed that the Governance and Committee Services Officer will investigate this and report back.

**MMMV.19/22 Chair to obtain information on which guidance documents have been endorsed by the SAC.** This action is ongoing.

**MMMV.20/22 Chair to approach College to consider releasing some articles to non-members.** This action is ongoing.

Dr Templeton raised the issue about retention of samples and chain of evidence samples documents which were going to be reviewed before Covid-19 but haven't been updated. The Governance and Committees Services Officer to add these guideline reviews to the action tracker.

#### **MMMV.03/23 Governance**

- (a)** Workplan – The SAC reviewed the workplan and agreed to remove the following:
- Develop clinical guidelines on entamoeba histolytica diagnosis and management.
  - Establish an Infective Endocarditis Study Group.
  - Develop guidelines on Infection Prevention in New Healthcare Estate.



The Chair encouraged the SAC to provide recommendations to include in the workplan. The SAC agreed to keep the microbiology study day and trainee research medals on the workplan and members offered to forward any potential ideas to the Chair.

#### **MMM.V.04/23 Workforce**

- a) Fiona Addiscott joined the meeting and advised she is carrying out a workforce intelligence review, focussing on understanding the challenges the workforce face and how to improve the collection and presentation of workforce data, to provide impactful reports. The SAC noted the importance of accurate, up to date data and welcomed the opportunity to contribute suggestions on potential improvements in key areas. Fiona advised that she would circulate the draft survey for comment to the SAC, with the intention of launching in Spring 2023. The previous Joint MM&MV SAC survey has now been published.

**Action: Fiona Addiscott to send the draft Joint MM&MV SAC survey to the SAC for comment.**

The Chair highlighted that one key area to focus on is the vacancies as this has a significant impact within the workforce. The Chair also advised that the survey needs to reflect the impact of people retiring and whether the changing workforce has the relevant competencies / training needed for best patient outcomes. The Chair asked if the workforce survey can capture the changing landscape for microbiologists and how their traditional role has evolved because the role itself has changed. The SAC agreed that these changes raise the question of how the service will cope with the increasing demands? Dr Morris suggested capturing data from new consultants over their 5 years of work and asking whether they feel competent to perform their clinical role.

- b) The Chair recommended sending two short surveys each year, similar to the current GP survey model, with one specific survey about retirement for consultants and one for trainees and their expectations are around fitting into the workforce.
- c) The Chair advised that the survey should highlight the number of trainees doing locum work and how there are clearly more options for being a locum within microbiology. There is also a growing culture of doctors wanting to work part-time, which needs to be discussed as it will have a significant impact on the workforce. Prof Davies acknowledged the concerns raised and advised she would raise them with Dr Ronan McMullan who is the Medical Microbiology Lead and Clinical Director of training.

**Action: Prof Davies to feedback concerns to Dr Ronan McMullan, Medical Microbiology Lead and Clinical Director of training, around**



**the number of trainees attracted to microbiology locum work and the impact on the workforce.**

**MMM.V.05/23 Training and Examinations**

- (a) Training – Dr Templeton advised that there is a new Chair on the Panel of Examiners, named Heli Harvala who will need to join the SAC.

**Action: The Governance and Committees Services Officer to invite the new Chair on the Panel of Examiners to the next SAC meeting in July.**

Dr Templeton advised that the Virology RCPATH examination has a new format being trialled. The new format is being reviewed by the GMC, with a pilot due in February for ratification. The new format includes a one-day exam, a short answer paper, longer clinical case questions and then an oral assessment. The SAC noted that the critical appraisal has been removed from the examination.

- (b) Trainee Update – Dr Ramsey advised that there is nothing to report at this stage, most feedback from the TAC is around the cost of living and examination fees, which the college is aware of.
- (c) HSST – Dr Templeton advised that the HSST programme in Wales and England has been successful, however, there has not been engagement from Scotland.

**MMM.V.06/23 Clinical Effectiveness**

- (a) No topics for RCPATH clinical audit templates were raised. Members were encouraged to consider topics and raise via the template.

**MMM.V.07/23 Academic Activities, Public Engagement, SAC Webpage**

- (a) The Chair encouraged the SAC to provide suggestions for ideas which could feature in the College's academic activities or public engagement work.
- (b) SAC Webpage - No suggested updates to the SAC webpage were raised. Members were reminded to regularly review the SAC page of the RCPATH website: [SAC page](#)
- (c) National Patient Safety Week – The Chair encouraged members to consider topics and events that would be suitable for the National Patient Safety Week in September. Members were encouraged to send any further suggestions to the Chair by the end of August.

**Action: Members to send the Chair / Governance and Committees Services Officer suggestions for National Patient Safety Week by the end of August 2023.**

**MMM.V.08/23 College *Bulletin*, Press and PR, Updating of College Documents**

- (a) Bulletin – The Chair encouraged the SAC to contribute articles for the Bulletin.



- (b) Best Practice Recommendations – There was nothing to report at this stage.

**MMM.V.09/23 College and External Committees**

**(a) College Council**

There were no updates from the College Council. It was noted that the last meeting was held in November 2022.

**(b) Oral Microbiology**

Dr Rautemaa-Richardson provided a written update, requesting that the college approve a modification of the Consultant Medical Microbiology model job description and person description which will include both GMC/GDC registration and ensure inclusivity and a clear career pathway for dentally qualified microbiologists. The proposal had the following actions for RCPATH:

- RCPATH to include the following paragraph in the Consultant Medical Microbiology model job description and person specification on the college website: <https://www.rcpath.org/profession/employing-pathologists/employing-doctors.html>
- All Consultant Medical Microbiology (or re-phrase as Consultant Microbiologist) posts must equally open to dentally qualified General Dental Council (GDC) registered microbiologists. Terms and conditions of service should be modified to read: the appointee will be required to maintain General Medical Council (GMC) or General Dental Council (GDC) full and specialist registration with a licence to practise and revalidation (GMC registration only), and should follow the GMC's guidance on Good Medical Practice.
- The generic person specification should be modified to read: Full and specialist registration (and with a licence to practise) with the General Medical Council (GMC) or General Dental Council (GDC) (or be eligible for registration within six months of interview).
- RCPATH adopt the concept of 'distributed regulation' as for Public Health / Health Protection. As both the GMC and GDC record microbiology as a specialty in their respective registers, medically and dentally qualified microbiology consultants remain with their existing regulator.

The SAC approved the proposed actions and the Governance and Committees Services Officer agreed to send the proposals to Prof Johnston for final approval before taking forward for implementation.

**Action: The Governance and Committees Services Officer to send Prof Johnston the proposed actions around modifying the Consultant Medical Microbiology model job description and person specification, for final RCPATH approval.**

**(c) UK SMI Bacteriology Working Group**

The SAC received a verbal update on the UK SMI Bacteriology Working Group from Dr Rautemaa-Richardson, highlighting that the SMI work is focussed on developing the syndromic algorithms, including pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical into one standard to support the development of electronic patient



record systems. The SAC will be informed when consultations are next out, as they will require input from the college. The SAC were pleased to note that SMI was published in collaboration with RCPATH and BIA and agreed this was a fantastic example of collaborative working.

**(d) British Infection Association**

Dr Ratnaraja advised that as a result of feedback from the workforce survey, the BIA has developed four working groups to optimise clinical review and clinical consultation. The consultation will be shared with the SAC once it has been reviewed by the JSC.

**(e) Mycology**

Dr Schelenz advised she has been trying to organise another mycology training day and will contact the trainee who was leading on it. The Chair suggested working with the college and recording the training to support overseas and refugee trainees.

Prof Davies confirmed that the Trustee Board has recently given approval to allow each speciality an annual training day free of charge at the college venue, Dr Schelenz advised she would look at this potential option further.

**(f) British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy**

Dr Brown advised he would circulate a written report following the meeting.

**(g) Healthcare Infection Society**

Dr Morris advised that the Healthcare Infection Society hosted a conference in collaboration with RCPATH in October 2022. The SAC were pleased to hear it was a success, with a high level of attendance.

The SAC noted that the Healthcare Infection Society are currently drafting guidelines around ritual and behaviours in the operating theatre through an external consultation via a webinar, Dr Morris will keep the SAC updated on progress.

**(h) Clinical Virology Network (CVN)**

There was no update in the absence of Dr Gillett.

**(i) Association of Clinical Pathologists**

Dr Morgan advised that she is currently drafting a training questionnaire for ACP trainees, focussed on ways of resolving workforce issues, like lab shortages. However, there are challenges around sending out the surveys to trainees due to GDPR. The Chair offered to support Dr Morgan further with this following the meeting.

**Action: Dr Morgan and the Chair to discuss GDPR challenges in sending out a training questionnaire to ACP trainees.**

Dr Morgan is currently developing a training video on benchwork and will potentially make it available on the pathology portal. Dr Morgan agreed to discuss this idea further with Prof Davies and will continue to keep the SAC updated.



**(j) Research Committee**

The minutes of the Research Committee meeting held on 10 October 2022 were received for information.

**(k) Pathology Informatics Committee**

The minutes of the Pathology Informatics Committee meeting held on 5 October 2022 were received for information.

**MMM.V.10/23 Environmental Sustainability**

The Chair encouraged members to consider how improvements can be implemented to improve environmental sustainability across labs.

**MMM.V.11/23 Any Other Business**

- (a)** Dr El Sakka highlighted that the current MTI route for international doctors hasn't been successful due to lack of government funding, resulting in doctors having to find another paid job elsewhere. Prof Davies advised that this scheme was paused but has been restarted as the Sri Lankan government can now provide funding, however, Dr El Sakka was asked to inform the RCPATH International team if any other further issues arise.
- (b)** Dr Sinha queried the governance process around raising concerns with examinations. Prof Davies advised that concerns around exams should be directed to the Chair of the Examinations Panel in the first instance, and then escalated to the Clinical Director of Examinations, Dr Nikki Cohen.

**MMM.V.12/23 Dates of Future Meetings**

Wednesday 26 July 2023, 10:30am.

*The meeting closed at 12.33pm*