

## International Pathology Day

**International Pathology Day** was established by the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) to recognise and celebrate the contribution and important role played by pathology and laboratory medicine services in addressing global health challenges and improving the health outcomes of people and communities around the world. This year, **International Pathology Day** will take place on **Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November**.

As the medical specialty concerned with determining the cause and nature of disease, pathology is critical for the prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of many of the leading causes of disease.

Pathologists, scientists and laboratory professionals, also play a vital role in public health by defining disease patterns in populations, maintaining cancer registries, lowering rates of medical errors and infections and improving the overall quality of healthcare.

It is estimated that pathology services provide over 70% of all the diagnoses which doctors use as the basis of their clinical decisions, whilst making up just 2% of global healthcare spending<sup>1,2</sup>. As a clinical knowledge service, pathology is fundamental to modern medical practice and healthcare.

**International Pathology Day** also provides an opportunity to highlight the global health challenges that pathologists, scientists and laboratory professionals work tirelessly to address:

- In 2012, there were an estimated 450,000 new cases of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) in the world. Globally 6% of new TB cases and 20% of previously treated TB cases are estimated to be MDR-TB.
- At the end of 2011, more than 8 million people were receiving antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries to treat HIV.
- Of the 108 million blood donations collected globally, approximately half of these are in high-income countries, home to 18% of the world's population. In low-income countries, up to 65% of blood transfusions are given to children under 5 years of age, whereas in high-

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ascp.org/PDF/Advocacy/Baucus-Letter.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://cms.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/Portals/2/WP76%20France%20Francis%20Lawrence.pdf>



income countries, the most frequently transfused patient group is over 65 years of age, accounting for up to 76% of all transfusions.

- Cancers are among the leading causes of death worldwide, and accounted for 8.2 million deaths in 2012. More than 60% of the world's total new annual cases occur in Africa, Asia and Central and South America. These regions account for 70% of the world's cancer deaths.
- 6.3 million children under the age of five died in 2013. More than half of these early child deaths were due to conditions that could have been prevented or treated with access to simple, affordable interventions. About 45% of all child deaths are linked to malnutrition and children in sub-Saharan Africa are more than 15 times more likely to die before the age of five than children in developed regions.
- An estimated 21.8 million infants worldwide are still missing out on basic vaccinations.
- It is estimated that in 2012, between 473,000 and 789,000 deaths were due to malaria. These deaths were mostly among African children.
- Tuberculosis (TB) is second only to HIV/AIDS as the greatest killer worldwide due to a single infectious agent. In 2012, 8.6 million people contracted TB and 1.3 million died from the disease. Over 95% of TB deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, and it is among the top three causes of death for women aged 15 to 44.
- Globally, two-thirds (38 million) of the 56 million annual deaths are still not registered.
- Almost all (99%) of the approximate 287,000 maternal deaths every year occur in developing countries.

The diagnosis and treatment of disease across the globe depends on the fields of pathology and laboratory medicine. Without pathology, there is no medicine!

Around the world, **International Pathology Day** is being supported by the following organisations:

- American Society for Clinical Pathology
- Association of Clinical Pathologists
- Academy of Medicine of Malaysia – College of Pathologists
- British Division of the International Academy of Pathology
- College of American Pathologists
- Canadian Association of Pathologists



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

- College of Pathologists of the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa
- College of Pathologists of East, Central and Southern Africa
- European Society of Pathology
- Hong Kong College of Pathologists
- Faculty of Pathology, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
- Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
- Labs Are Vital
- West African Division of the International Academy of Pathology
- World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
- Pakistan Association of Pathologists

