



## **Newsletter from Dr Mike Osborn, President, The Royal College of Pathologists - January 2021**

### **President's message**

#### **COVID-19 pandemic**

The new year has seen an acceleration in the global health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, placing huge pressure on people working in health services. I would like to thank health professionals around the world, including our members, for their service. They have worked tirelessly throughout this crisis for the benefit of patients. It was also fantastic to see their work recognised in the [Queen's New Year Honour's list](#).

A special mention should go to our virology and immunology colleagues. Working at the forefront of the outbreak, they have developed, overseen and run testing services, had oversight of the treatment of affected patients and, most spectacularly perhaps, helped develop the vaccines that now provide us with the hope that this terrible episode will end.

The College fully supports the vaccination programme and we have successfully lobbied to ensure all frontline healthcare workers, whether they work for the NHS or for other organisations, are offered vaccination at the earliest opportunity to ensure they can continue to support healthcare needs during the pandemic.

#### **On the agenda**

I have been to regular meetings with the Chief Medical Officer of England, the Medical Director of NHS England and their teams. Meetings where the input of you our members, has directly helped shape the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During these meetings they have specifically asked me to pass on their gratitude and thanks to you for all your hard work at this difficult time.

- It was great to be present at the College Education update, which focused on COVID-19 issues and College priorities, confirming arrangements for the new curricula and assessment programme and outlining our plans to develop exams, education and training going forward. Thanks to all the other speakers.

- I was honoured to meet Professor Alawi Alsheikh-Ali, the Provost and Dean of the College of Medicine at Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences (MBRU) [to celebrate a memorandum of understanding](#) between MBRU and the RCPATH. Everyone at the College is excited about our collaboration which will help improve teaching and healthcare in both our institutions.
- I was pleased to join, along with Professor Richard Tedder, Chair of the College Specialty Advisory Committee on Medical Virology and Microbiology, a roundtable event organised by the *Health Service Journal* on developing COVID-19 testing. A summary of this event should be published by the HSJ in the near future. Also on the subject of testing, we have released a [College statement](#), supported by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, about negative results from Lateral flow antigen tests. While a negative result suggests that a person tested is not infected at the time of the test, it does not entirely rule out the possibility and people must continue to take suitable precautions.
- I also contributed to an online event on the *Age of the Genome – Securing the Future of Precision Medicine in Cancer Care*, organised by the New Statesman. A special supplement covering this is due to be published by the New Statesman in the near future.
- I was very pleased to speak at the short course in autopsy pathology at the [British Division of the International Academy of Pathology](#) virtual conference. There were many excellent sessions, including two trainee sessions on dermatopathology and social media. Thank you to all involved.
- It was good to have opportunity to speak with [Dr Dai Lloyd MS](#), Chair of the Wales Health, Social Care and Sport committee on workforce, about many areas of healthcare but particularly to discuss increased access to training in medicine for all groups and COVID-19. Dr Lloyd has been extremely helpful in highlighting training, recruitment and salary issues in Wales and the country as a whole.
- We were pleased to welcome the *Mend the Gap* report into the gender pay gap in medicine in England and will strive to address the recommendations within our remit. The College is a member of the [Inequalities in Health Alliance](#), which is calling on the government to develop a strategy to reduce inequalities and work towards fairer, healthier lives.
- I was sent the following guidance from NHS England at the end of last year which you may find useful - [EU exit: key messages for NHS organisations](#)
- As lead medical royal college for [medical examiners](#), we were pleased to hear that the Department of Health and Social Care remains committed to making the medical examiner system statutory, subject to parliamentary approval when time allows. They also anticipate the non-statutory system will continue throughout the financial year 2021–2022 and will keep us updated regarding progress.

I wish you all the best during this very difficult time. Thank you for all your hard work, you are doing a great job and it is really appreciated by the College, our leaders and most importantly by our patients.

**Best wishes**

**Dr Mike Osborn, President, The Royal College of Pathologists**

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## **WORKING FOR MEMBERS**

### **Royal College of Pathologists Learning Programme: COVID-19 pandemic update SAVE THE DATE – January 2021**

The COVID-19 webinars which the College ran in 2020 were very well-received. Since then there have been many developments in diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics and understanding of transmission, all of which are highly relevant to the practice of College Fellows. With this in mind we are very pleased to announce we will be hosting a follow up to the first series with five short 30 minute webinars, to run weekly from January 20, in the evenings from 7pm.

Introduced again by virologist and College Fellow, Professor Will Irving, each seminar will be led by a subject expert. Proposed topics include testing, vaccines, therapies, Long COVID and pathology.

### **UK online workforce census – are your details up to date?**

From 19 January, if you have not completed your [workforce census online](#) (log-in required) for over 365 days, you will be redirected to fill it in when logging in. We are keen for you to complete the census and will continue to remind you until you do so. You will still be able to log in and browse the website as normal.

The information you provide is kept confidential and only used in an anonymised form. Using this data, we can push for resources for the profession and influence workforce planning agencies. Remember, the more data we have, the more we can do.

It takes fewer than five minutes to complete the 14 census questions covering specialty, funding, on-call arrangements, number of Direct Clinical Care activities, Supporting Professional Activities, Programmed Activities and anticipated retirement age. For more information, please contact [fiona.addiscott@rcpath.org](mailto:fiona.addiscott@rcpath.org).

### **UK medical consultants: would you like training to attend an AAC interview panel?**

Are you an established consultant i.e. more than 3 years in a substantive post, undertaking CPD, have equality and diversity training, and would be interested in representing the College on Advisory Appointment Committee/s (AACs)?

If so, we have 130 free licences for a half hour online training module to use before 1 April 2021 on a first come, first served basis. Based on feedback from this pilot exercise, we will roll it out more widely. Ideally we would like you to follow up the training by attending one AAC in the first 12 months. If you are interested, please contact: [workforce@rcpath.org](mailto:workforce@rcpath.org)

### **International Collaboration on Cancer Reporting (ICCR) datasets consultation**

The [ICCR draft Bone and Soft Tissue datasets](#) are now available for review. The documents are available for comments until Friday 19 February 2021.

### **College building and facilities**

The College's building at 6 Alie Street remains open, within government restrictions, throughout the lockdown period for essential activities such as training, exams and meetings. The building will be closed when not in use, so if you wish to come in, please contact [reception](#) for opening times.

College staff are continuing to work remotely and are contactable by [email and phone](#). We will be constantly reviewing arrangements in line with official guidelines.

## **REGIONAL NEWS**

### **England Regional Council and regional representation**

Over the last year, the England Regional Council (ERC) has been considering its purpose and future and as part of this, conducted a membership survey for views on how to engage with members and fellows across England. One of the main observations has been that members and fellows tend to contact the 'central' College with queries rather than use the ERC structure. This resulted in a decision, made by the ERC to disband its formal structure and move towards more digital and interactive, regionally organised forms of communication and representation. Therefore, the ERC is being wound up and this decision was confirmed by College Council in November 2020.

ERC representatives are exploring new ways to connect with members and to provide representation for the four English regions (North, Midlands and East, South, and London) at College Council. Further news on this will follow in the first few months of 2021.

## **PROMOTING PATHOLOGY**

### **Science communication prize winner announced**

Congratulations to neuropathology trainee, Dr Matthew Clarke, on winning the Furness Prize for Science Communication 2020. Read our [news post](#) to find out more about Matt and the prize.

### **Volunteering opportunity – pathology careers videos for visually impaired children**

We have a volunteering opportunity for members from any specialty to produce some short 'selfie-style' videos about their work and careers for a [virtual science festival for visually impaired young people](#). We will support volunteers with their recording and the commitment should only be for around one hour at a time that is convenient to you. Please [contact us](#) to find out more.

### **Public Engagement Innovation Grant Scheme 2021 is now open**

Our annual [public engagement grant scheme](#) provides financial support for the delivery of pathology-related activities and events in the UK. Grants of up to £1,000 are available for individuals or organisations wishing to develop pathology-related public engagement activities or events. We are accepting applications until 1 June 2021 and it's never too early to start planning. The public engagement team is happy to answer questions and provide advice to any prospective grant applicants, so [get in touch](#) if you would like to discuss your application. Online/virtual event ideas are welcome. Find out more on our [website](#).

## INTERNATIONAL

### **International Pathology Day 2020**

In November, International Pathology Day 2020 went virtual, with an audience spanning nearly every continent. The programme boasted a fantastic line-up of international speakers and a roundtable discussion on the theme of 'Infection through the lens of COVID-19 with an International viewpoint'.

The poster competition, sponsored by Sonic Healthcare UK for the second year, saw some fantastic entries. The day finished with a special musical tribute from Rod Gozzett to healthcare professionals. You can read more about the day in our [Celebrating International Pathology Day blog](#) We would also like to thank *The Pathologist*, Sonic Healthcare UK and The British Society for Haematology for collaborating with us to make it happen.

## COLLEGE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### **COVID-19 – College conferences update**

All scheduled College face-to-face conferences and events have been postponed until the end of March. We continue to review the situation and the pandemic's impact on our events, as it is possible there will be further postponements.

However, we are pleased to be able to run many of our meetings and conferences virtually to ensure we can provide all Fellows, delegates and guests with appropriate learning and CPD. Details will be shared of changes to any events.

### **Soft tissue tumours from infants to young adults: the age matters – Virtual Training**

**Thursday 28 and Friday 29 January 2021**

**This event will now take place virtually**

**CPD credits: 9 for attending both days**

This event will be a case-based approach to the current major clinicopathologic issues in soft tissue tumours in different paediatric ages. The event is targeted at paediatric pathologists, histopathologists and trainees. Originally scheduled for March 2020, it will now take place virtually. Please contact [meetings@rcpath.org](mailto:meetings@rcpath.org) if you have any questions.

### **Pathology and the environment – Virtual Event**

**Thursday 11 February 2021**

**CPD Credits: 1**

The College aims to reduce or, ideally, minimise the environmental impact of its activities, and to advocate for the health of our planet by collating and disseminating examples of good practice in pathology, educating and inspiring members to adopt these practices. Following on from the publication of [The College's strategy for a sustainable future](#), this webinar will inspire people to think about changes they could make to lessen pathology's impact on the environment.

This free event is aimed at everyone who works in pathology, including pathologists (consultants, trainees, SAS doctors), administrative staff, laboratory managers, medical laboratory assistants and biomedical scientists.

### **The Beautiful Brain**

**Thursday 15 and Friday 16 April 2021**

**To be held at the Royal College of Pathologists, 6 Alie Street, London E1 8QT**

**CPD credits: 13**

This special course focuses on the instrumental role of neuropathological study in the analysis of human brain disorders, examining prenatal onset, management, cause identification, genetic advice, and research on human neurodevelopment and new therapies.

This course is recommended to perinatal and paediatric pathologists, neuropathologists, neuroradiologists, neurologists, gynaecologist-obstetricians, geneticists and neuroscientists, and health professionals involved in prenatal/fetal medicine.

### **Medical Examiner Annual Conference – Virtual Event**

**Tuesday 27 April 2021**

**CPD credits: 6**

The first annual Medical Examiner Conference is being held via Zoom on 27 April 2021. The National Medical Examiner will present his first *Annual Report* and there will be contributions from representatives of the Department of Health and Social Care, the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch, the Care Quality Commission, the Chief Coroner and faith communities. There will also be an opportunity to hear about local implementation in England and Wales. This conference will be of interest to medical examiners and officers, coroners and anyone who works to improve patient safety or support the bereaved. The day will run from 9.30 to 4.30pm.

### **Update on placenta: physiology and new concepts**

**Thursday 17 and Friday 18 June 2021**

**To be held at the Royal College of Pathologists, 6 Alie Street, London E1 8QT**

**CPD credits: 9**

Placental pathology is a unique area of perinatal pathology. Its understanding requires knowledge of normal development, physiology and histopathology, as well as fetal and maternal medicine. Requests for placental examinations have grown enormously in recent years, but this has not been matched by a growth in numbers of histopathologists trained in reporting them. This course will provide an update on placental physiology, current classification and new insights into the knowledge of placental conditions.

The course is designed for paediatric/perinatal and general histopathology trainees at any stage of their training, as well as consultants. The course will also be of benefit to obstetricians, both consultants and those in training.

### **Medical examiner training**

The College is the lead medical royal college for medical examiners and provides training for any doctor wishing to work as a medical examiner. Participants will need to complete 26 mandatory e-learning modules and attend an entire face-to-face training day to receive a certificate of completion. The day includes short presentations, small group discussions of case scenarios and the opportunity to share experience.

New medical examiners who successfully complete the training and the e-learning modules will be invited to join the College as members.

All events are currently fully booked. If you have any questions about training or scheduled events, please contact the Events team directly at [meetings@rcpath.org](mailto:meetings@rcpath.org).

### **Medical examiner officer training**

The College also leads on the training of medical examiner officers (MEOs).

MEOs work closely with medical examiners and undertake tasks such as coordinating the completion of death certificates and referrals to the coroner and speaking to clinicians and bereaved families.

MEOs may come from a wide range of backgrounds. For example, nurses, healthcare scientists or bereavement officers, although this list is not exhaustive. More information, including a model job description, is on the College website.

The face-to-face training day is the second part of MEO training. Everyone attending the course must have completed the 26 mandatory core e-learning modules before the date of the course to get the most out of the training day. The e-learning modules can be accessed here. (Registration with e-Learning for Healthcare is required.)

### **Medical examiner officer training session – Virtual Training**

**Tuesday 2 February 2021**

**CPD credits: 5**

### **Medical examiner officer training session – Virtual Training**

**Thursday 25 March 2021**

**CPD credits: 5**

**For further information, please contact the RCPATH Conference department at [meetings@rcpath.org](mailto:meetings@rcpath.org) or on 020 7451 6700.**

## **NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

### **New guidance to help trusts improve the care of COVID-19 patients - Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT)**

Endorsed by the College, the guide - Clinical practice guide for improving the management of adult COVID-19 patients in secondary care has been issued to trusts by GIRFT to help hospital staff and managers improve the care of COVID-19 patients

### **Doctors in Distress**

Doctors in Distress is a charity committed to eradicating stigma, changing behaviours and cultures, and promoting the value of good leadership to reduce suicide rates among medical doctors. You can find out more about their work at Doctors in Distress.

### **BBC news survey – Experiences of BAME doctors**

BBC News is carrying out research into the experiences of BAME doctors during the coronavirus pandemic. The survey is in the form of a short, anonymous questionnaire. The data will be held in accordance with GDPR rules and will not be forwarded to anyone within or outside of the BBC. The findings will inform a report for the BBC's national TV and Radio News programmes, as well as BBC Online platforms. The deadline for submitting responses is 23.59 on 31 January 2021.

Should you require any further information, please contact Amara Sophia Elahi at the BBC: [amarasophia.elahi@bbc.co.uk](mailto:amarasophia.elahi@bbc.co.uk). The survey can be accessed here: BBC Research: BAME Doctors and Covid-19

## **OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**

21 January 2021  
[ASH 2020 Highlights](#)

22 January 2021  
[Into clinical practice: Pneumonia](#)

22 January 2021  
[An introduction to guideline development](#)

25 January 2021  
[ASH 2020 Highlights](#)

27 January 2021  
[Tumours of the Female Genital Tract, Updates from the 5th Edition of the WHO classification](#)

10-11 February 2021  
[British Association of Urological Pathologists Virtual Bladder Pathology Course](#)

21 April 2020  
[Non-Operative Breast Pathology Update Course](#)

**RCPATH CPD-accredited online resources can be found at the following [link](#)**





