



What Pathologists Really Do

Event title	What Pathologists Really Do.
Venue	Laboratories, Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.
Target audience	Students from year 12 and above.
Objectives	To demonstrate the role of pathology to potential medical and biomedical science applicants.
Age range	16+ years.
How was the event advertised?	Using a local Department of Education initiative that arranges work placements for students, liaising with local careers teachers and schools.
Number attending	70 students (over 5 days).
Booking required?	Yes.
Length of event	3 hours (each afternoon during National Pathology Week).
Refreshments provided?	No.
Equipment needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working laboratory.• Formalin fixed specimens (with consent for use).• Trays.• Aprons,.• Gloves.• In micro: selection of plated organisms to demonstrate.• In haematology: range of blood smears for microscopy.
People needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microbiologist, haematologist and virologist to explain their individual roles.• BMS staff to demonstrate processing in tissue path, haematology and microbiology.• MTO in mortuary to help set up specimens for the organ demonstration.

Printed material used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack made up for each student with National Pathology Week handouts. • Choices of careers in pathology (from RCPATH website). • Speciality specific information.
Room set up	Space required for 'Guess the Organ' competition - trays laid out with specimens in an appropriate down drafted work area, otherwise a general tour around the labs.
Event programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Meet and greet' at reception. • Tour of tissue pathology, explanation of specimen dissection, demonstration by BMS of section preparation (and allow couple of students a chance), demonstration of quick H&E stain (allow student a go). • 'Guess the Organ': range of surgical resections and autopsy based cases. • Tour round haematology, virology, microbiology and clinical chemistry, interspersed by a short talk each day from a clinician (paediatric surgery, oncology etc depending on availability) to explain how they use the lab.
Possible variations	Depends on labs and personnel available to visit.
What did the audience particularly like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a chance to handle the tissues and organs. • Seeing plated samples in microbiology - pseudomonas and fungi in particular!
What surprised the audience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What organs and tissues look and feel like. • How much work goes on behind the scenes in hospital. • Seeing team work in action – they didn't realise we have a close working relationship with clinical colleagues. • Microbiologists doing ward rounds.
What else would the audience have liked?	More time in tissue pathology and microbiology - these were the two favourite areas.
How much preparation was involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing suitable specimens with appropriate consent, logistics of arranging personnel to be present at right time and place. • Organising the students attachments was done by the Dept of Education group - the students were required to sign indemnity and confidentiality agreements prior to visiting. • The places were offered to preferentially to those schools who had booked a careers talk, as the careers talk acted as an introduction to the day.
Any other comments?	Would need more than one member of staff to be involved in escorting the students. Contingency plans needed for people who faint or feel unwell (rooms set aside, a helper on hand to look after them).
Images	
For more information please contact	<p>Caroline Gannon Department of Histopathology Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast BT12 6BA</p> <p>caroline.gannon@belfasttrust.hscni.net</p>