



Newsletter from Dr Mike Osborn, President, The Royal College of Pathologists – April 2021

President's Messages of the Month – academy message

Having just marked one year since the first lockdown, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognise and thank you all for the tremendous work you have undertaken during this exceptional year. Whether a trainee, an SAS doctor, a consultant or a retiree who returned to work, and whether you are dealing directly with the COVID-19 pandemic or ensuring that vital pathology, mortuary and diagnostic services have continued to meet the needs of our patients and the public, your dedication and commitment during the most challenging of circumstances has been extraordinary. You are a credit to the profession.

Thank you.

Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine

You will be aware of the announcements from the [Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency](#) (MHRA) and [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) (JCVI). The JCVI has outlined an amendment to the use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, recommending that people under 30 in the UK should be offered an alternative COVID-19 vaccine.

While the MHRA did not find a definitive causal link between vaccination and blood clotting, they acknowledged that the link is becoming firmer.

For the majority of the population, the Oxford-AstraZenca vaccine is safe and effective and the benefits outweigh any risks. I gave an interview on the [BBC News Channel](#) (interview starts 5.40 minutes in) reiterating this position.

[The British Society for Haematology \(BSH\)](#), has also published guidance for any possible incidences, this guidance is being updated regularly.

Devolved nation elections – College priorities

Elections for the Senedd in Wales and the Scottish Parliament take place on 6 May.

We have published our priorities for pathology and laboratory services for the [next Scottish Parliament](#) and [for the next Senedd in Wales](#). Both sets of election calls have been welcomed by parliamentarians in both countries.

While Northern Ireland does not have an election this year, we have updated our [briefing on pathology specialties involved in cancer services](#) in Northern Ireland.

Community Diagnostic Hubs – Expert advisory group

I am a member of the Expert Group, chaired by Professor Sir Mike Richards, advising on the development and implementation of [Community Diagnostic Hubs](#) (CDHs).

The College is fully supportive of the development of CDHs and thinks they could offer tangible benefits to patients through quick and easier access to a range of diagnostic services. We will be working closely with the Royal College of Radiologists, Royal College of General Practitioners and the Institute of Biochemical Science to ensure the hubs are introduced with sufficient resources in terms of staffing, IT provision and connectivity with other systems (such as pathology networks and GP practices).

Pathology portal

An exciting new development for the College is the Pathology Portal. This will be a new online platform that will enable members to access material, initially image based, to help and support learning and training. This exciting project is the brainchild of Professor Jo Martin, our former College president, who is the project lead. It is being very generously funded by [Health Education England](#) (HEE) and we aim to launch it in the summer this year as part of the HEE Learning Hub, HEE's new digital platform. It will be directly accessible from our own College website.

In [this blog](#), Dr Hasan Rizvi, Clinical Lead for the Pathology Portal, outlines the aim of the project and some of the milestones that have been achieved in its development so far.

Medical Examiner Annual Conference – 27 April

I am looking forward to giving the welcome address at the [Medical Examiner Annual Conference](#), hosted by the College on 27 April.

Nadine Dorries MP, Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health, will be giving a ministerial address at the event. Places are still available via the [College website](#).

On the agenda

- We noted the practices featured in BBC's Panorama '[Undercover - Inside the Covid Testing Lab](#)' broadcast on Monday 29 March. Alongside our colleagues, including those at the [Institute of Biomedical Science](#) (IBMS) and [Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory medicine](#) (ACB), we call for all laboratories involved in diagnostic testing to adhere to the highest standards of professional practice and governance.
- We celebrated International Women's Day in March. In keeping with this year's theme, #ChooseToChallenge, we heard what choosing to challenge means for [two College members working in pathology services in Ecuador and Jordan](#).
- It was an honour to welcome delegates to the third Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration in Histopathology course. Around 150 virtual attendees enjoyed talks from the General Medical Council and College speakers.
- I recently attended a roundtable discussion organised by [The King's Fund](#) on the future role of diagnostics in the NHS' model of care. This was a good opportunity to highlight how workforce pressures across the four UK nations are being compounded by the pandemic. There have been reductions in patients seeking help for their symptoms, including a significant decline in referrals from primary

care leading to substantial delays in diagnosis and a significant backlog of cases.

- I had a productive meeting with [Elliot Colburn MP](#) (Conservative, Carshalton and Wallington), along with Macmillan Cancer Support. Elliot Colburn will be writing to Ministers in the Department for Health and Social Care, as well as the Treasury, to highlight the College's concerns about the backlog in cancer services and the related surge of demand for pathology services, particularly for cancer diagnosis and treatment.
- We have continued to showcase the benefits of genomic medicine through our [On the Agenda](#) pages, and look out for themed articles in this month's Bulletin. [Genomic medicine](#) is an opportunity for faster diagnosis and tailored treatment for people with cancer and inherited diseases. However, genomic services will require investment, labs with the right equipment and enough staff trained and equipped with the right skills.
- [Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month](#) took place in March. To promote the role pathologists play in diagnosis and treatment, gynecological pathologist, Dr Jackie McDermott, [highlighted the important work pathologists do](#) in early detection of pre-cancerous or cancerous changes.

The Pathologist Power List 2021 – nominate your colleagues, or yourself!

Nominations for [The Pathologist magazine's 2021 Power List](#) have now opened. The Power list is an opportunity to recognise those working in pathology and laboratory medicine.

The categories are:

- Behind the scenes: non-pathologist laboratory professionals
- In the wings: early-career laboratory professionals
- Leading roles: educators and mentors
- In the spotlight: outreach and advocacy
- Showstoppers: drivers of discovery
- Front(line) and centre: pandemic heroes.

This is a great opportunity for you to celebrate the amazing work of your colleagues during an exceptionally difficult year.

Dr Mike Osborn, President, The Royal College of Pathologists

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WORKING FOR MEMBERS

Being a specialty doctor in the UK

SAS doctors in the UK are often grouped together with senior trainees and not everyone has a very clear understanding of their professional identity, as it can take many shapes. Dr Azka Anees – Specialty Doctor in Histopathology at Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust – explains more about her own experience and the key role this category plays within the pathology workforce. [Read our other blogs.](#)

Webinars: What I Wish I'd Known

The College's Trainee Advisory Committee has worked closely with the Learning and Communications directorates in the College to produce videos to support trainees as they prepare for exams. The last year has been challenging for everyone but none more so than trainees who, as well as having their training impacted, have continued to prepare for their College examinations. These videos are intended to provide tips and advice to support trainees. Videos will be added for other specialties as soon as they are available. We are very grateful to the trainees who have provided them.

Website update: Improving password security

From 26 April, we will be introducing new functionality for passwords to further improve on our site security. The aim of this is to help prevent bruteforce attacks, which uses trial and error to guess log in information correctly with excessive forceful attempts. When logging into the College website, if a password is entered incorrectly more than 10 times, the account will be locked for 30 minutes. After the 30 minutes are up, a new password will need to be created. The website will warn you when there are 3 or less attempts left. If you have any questions, please contact the Publishing and Digital team at digital@rcpath.org

CQI Mentoring Scheme

Do you need some support and encouragement with quality improvement? Did you know we have a mentoring scheme to support College members who are seeking to develop or improve their CQI skills? Please visit [CQI mentoring scheme](#) for more information.

E-learning for UK consultant interviews: sitting on an Advisory Appointment Committee (AAC) panel

This 30-minute virtual course delivers an overview of AAC procedures. It was developed to ensure royal college representatives can provide an effective and purposeful presence in the interview process.

This free course is aimed at UK interviewers who sit on AACs and will be of interest to those involved in the recruitment process.

Access the course to find out more about:

- interviewing good practice for royal college representatives
- equality and diversity legislation
- handling difficult scenarios
- interactive tools with practical tips and examples.

The course is worth 1 CPD point and a certificate of completion is provided. Please contact workforce@rcpath.org for more information and to enrol.

Submit a case study and claim CPD credits

Would you like to share your knowledge and experiences with colleagues and earn CPD credits?

We are looking for case studies on experiences that have, or may have, impacted on patient safety. The case study should describe what went well or less well, and why.

We would also like to hear how the situation was approached and resolved, what was learnt, and how this was shared. This constitutes high-quality learning and you can claim 1 CPD credit per case study you send us in your online CPD portfolio.

For an example of a published case study, please see [Never do without the \(software\) glue](#). For more information, please email cpd@rcpath.org.

Blog – Dr Francesca Heard: a typical day in the life of an infectious diseases and microbiology trainee

In this blog, Dr Francesca Heard, an Infectious Diseases and Microbiology Trainee at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust, describes a typical 'day in the life' of a trainee in this specialty and her future career goals.

AWARDS

Percy Oliver Memorial Award

This award is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of blood transfusion. The category for this year's award is scientific or technical transfusion.

Nominations and accompanying citations should be submitted to the Transfusion Medicine Specialty Advisory Committee for consideration by 25 June 2021 via Alison Morgan (alison.morgan@rcpath.org).

Please use the citation to describe your nominee's background, achievements and contributions to the field of blood transfusion in no more than 750 words.

Percy Oliver Trainee Travel Bursary

The Trainee Travel Bursary is offered each spring and autumn to a value of up to £500. The bursary can be used to cover costs for trainee clinicians and clinical scientists enrolled in a recognised UK training scheme and working in the field of transfusion medicine, to enable their participation in a national or international blood transfusion meeting.

Further details and an application form can be downloaded from the [College website](#). The deadline for spring applications is 5pm on Friday 30 April.

REGIONAL NEWS

Save the date – please save the dates below for the regional symposia taking place online this year. Further information about each of the events will follow over the next few months:

- Northern Ireland Symposium – Thursday 27 May 2021 (9.30am–1.30pm) to be followed by Trainee Forum with the President (2–3pm)
- Wales Symposium – Wednesday 9 June 2021 (1–5pm) – Trainee Forum with the President to be held between 12–1pm
- Scotland Symposium – Friday 8 October.

PROMOTING PATHOLOGY

Sign up for the RCPATH Book Club featuring Gulp – Thursday 22 April

Join Mary Roach and an expert panel as we explore her book, *Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal*. Visit [RCPATH book club](#).

Our annual Art of Pathology competition is now open

We're inviting entrants of all ages from the UK and abroad to interpret this year's theme, 'All Together Now', using any artistic medium of choice. The winner from each of the three age categories will receive £50 and have their artwork published online and in the Bulletin. For more information and inspiration, visit [Art of Pathology](#).

Help spread the word about our essay competitions

This year we're encouraging Foundation doctors and undergraduates to explore COVID-19 testing strategies and the contributions of pathology to managing COVID-19, respectively. Winners will receive £200 and have their essay published. Find out more and enter at [Essay competitions](#).

New publications:

- [G187 Dataset for histopathological reporting of carcinomas and mucinous neoplasms of the appendix](#)
- [G071 Dataset for histopathological reporting of cervical carcinomas](#)
- [G147 National minimum retesting intervals in pathology](#)

COLLEGE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The Beautiful Brain – Virtual Event

Thursday 15 and Friday 16 April 2021

CPD credits: 10

This event, which is now taking place virtually, is a special course that 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.

New virtual registration fees and programme available soon. [Contact us](#) for more details.

Diagnostics and classification of pituitary neoplasms – Virtual Event

Friday 23 April 2021

CPD credits: 4

This webinar will provide an up-to-date overview on accurate, clinically relevant classification of pituitary tumours with routine histological and advanced molecular techniques and will be of interest to consultants and trainees in neuropathology as well as anyone interested in diagnostics of pituitary tumours.

Following the review of pituitary gland development, clinically relevant classification of posterior pituitary tumours and specific recommendations for classification of neuroendocrine tumours of adenohypophysis will be discussed. To compare the

diagnostic approach to classification of pituitary tumours across the UK, centres with recently proposed diagnostic criteria findings from a national audit will be presented. The landscape of genetic alterations observed in pituitary tumours and their role in diagnostics and biological behaviour will be addressed. An approach for classification of neuroendocrine tumours of adenohypophysis integrating histological and molecular findings will be presented.

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 9.30–4.30pm.

Going digital: Practical guide to digital pathology deployments from those who've done it

Tuesday 11 May 2021

CPD credits: 3

An online workshop about the practicalities of implementing digital pathology. The event covers the College approach to digital pathology safety, practical advice from several groups who have implemented digital pathology. Also covered will be the latest College guidance on using digital pathology during the COVID-19 pandemic. A Q&A session will allow delegates plenty of opportunity to get tips from those who've already gone digital.

Solving the Enigma of the Liver Biopsy – Virtual Event & Bitesize Series

Friday 14 May 2021 and weekly events from 1 June

CPD credits: 12

To accompany our one day programme, 'Solving the Enigma of the Liver Biopsy – Virtual Event', the 'Bitesize Liver' webinar series has been added. Delegates will have the option to attend the full day programme only, the full day programme plus all the webinar sessions or the option to pick and choose what to attend.

Virtual Liver Event – 14 May 2021 – The aim of this 'virtual' liver day is to provide a good grounding for the approach to liver biopsies. It will also facilitate updates of recent practical advancements in liver pathology and the understanding of more common diagnoses to improve a standardised approach to the reporting of liver cases. It is relevant to all those who report liver pathology.

Bitesize Liver webinar series: 1 June to 5 July – A webinar series of six one-hour long sessions to run weekly, starting 1 June 2021. These sessions will have a small number of digital slides made available to view prior to each week. Each session will include discussion through the cases, with experts highlighting any recent advancements in that area and also providing hints and tips to aid in diagnosis.

Nottingham Breast Pathology Online Masterclass – Addressing Challenges in Breast Pathology – External Event

Thursday 27 May 2021

CPD credits: 7

The renowned masterclass moves online in 2021, focusing on addressing challenges in diagnostic breast pathology. With a faculty of leading experts from across the world, the masterclass is ideal for practising pathologists, pathology Fellows and trainees. Topics include:

- the use of IHC in diagnostic breast pathology
- improving concordance in breast cancer reporting
- an update on receptor assessment in breast cancer and pitfalls
- WHO updates on breast tumour classification
- diagnostically challenging breast lesions
- diagnostic challenges on core biopsies
- approaches to diagnosis microscopy workshops
- meet the experts.

Update on placenta: physiology and new concepts – Virtual Event

Thursday 17 and Friday 18 June 2021

CPD credits: 10

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 exponentially in recent years, but this has not been matched by a growth in 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 mandatory 26 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.

Medical examiner training session – Virtual Training

Thursday 22 April 2021

CPD credits: 6

Medical examiner training session – Virtual Training

Thursday 20 May 2021

CPD credits: 6

Medical examiner training session – Virtual Training

Wednesday 16 June 2021

CPD credits: 6

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](#)

Friday 9 July 2021

CPD credits: 6

For further information, please contact the RCPATH Conference Department at meetings@rcpath.org or on 020 7451 6700.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

21 April 2021

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

21–23 April 2021

[EFI 2021, From Research to Clinical Reality](#)

21 April 2021

[Post EBMT Update Day](#)

25–28 April 2021

[BSH 2021 Virtual ASM](#)

26–30 April 2021

[Annual Conference Online 2021](#)

5 May 2021

[UKFHD 51st Academic Meeting](#)

10–11 May 2021

British Association of Urological Pathologists Virtual Bladder Pathology Course – For more information, please contact: events@baup.org.uk

12 May 2021

[BSBMTCT Scientific Day](#)

24–25 May 2021

British Association of Urological Pathologists Virtual Prostate Pathology Course – For more information, please contact: events@baup.org.uk

21–25 June 2021

IAOP meeting 2021 (online meeting)

Live On-line Diagnostic Dermatopathology course – 4–9 September 2021

Then 2 hours every Saturday 10am–12pm up to 30+ hours

For more information, please email Dr Hend Mahfouz: hendmahfouz21@gmail.com

RCPATH CPD-accredited online resources can be found [here](#).

