



The Association for Clinical Biochemistry

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Claire Rees, ACB NPW Lead 2010

What is pathology?

A common misconception is that pathologists only work with dead people – a belief fuelled by programmes such as CSI. What we all know is that pathology is the study of disease and involved in 70% of the diagnoses made in the NHS-an important message that we need to give to the public. This is one of the main aims of National Pathology Week.

During my own experience of NPW and other similar events it became apparent that the vast majority of people do not know what happens to their pathology sample, that there are highly trained and skilled scientists working for the NHS and what a hospital laboratory looks like. NPW gives us the opportunity to talk to the public and get the above information across. The majority of the public are very interested in this and are more than happy to take leaflets/information away. The events also give the public an opportunity to ask us questions and we get to see how the public view the service we currently provide and also how we can improve.

Members of the ACB, particularly trainees, have organised some of the best events during the last two National Pathology Weeks. It would be great to continue this tradition and show people just how essential clinical biochemists are to modern healthcare.

Pathology: the building blocks of life

This is the theme of NPW 2010. The theme for 2009 was the heart and this was a great success with over 400 events taking place in the UK (an increase on the NPW 2008 by 100). Having a theme gives organisers a focus but it is not a necessity to keep to that theme. It is a broad theme and can encompass many things including how pathology is involved in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of pregnancy related and childhood illness as well as providing a link to other aspects of science including how cells and DNA are building blocks of life. If you would like to do an event but are struggling to think of any idea or would like to speak to someone who has done an event before then contact me on the email address below. NPW is a good way to meet other pathologists in your area as well as developing team working and communication skills, so get involved!

How to get involved

The NPW website <http://www.nationalpathologyweek.org/> is an excellent source of information and a must for anyone thinking of organising an event. If you would like to organise or help out at an event a good place to start is by contacting your regional co-ordinator (go to the regional co-ordinator tab at the top of the NPW website for information) and for trainees also your regional ACB trainee representative. If you are organising an event then make sure you register your event online on the website. If you register by September 17th you are guaranteed to receive freebies and other materials. Some resources may be available after that date but can't be guaranteed.

Finally good luck with your event and if you have any questions or would like any advice/ideas please contact me at claire.rees@ggc.scot.nhs.uk