

Professional identity development in junior doctors and registrars: A focus on anatomical pathology.

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INTRODUCTION
Anatomical pathology (the diagnosis of disease through tissue examination) is a specialist branch of medicine facing significant workforce shortages. A lack of professional identity (PI) development opportunities for junior doctors is one proposed cause, but the PI of anatomical pathologists has yet to be characterised in depth. This scoping review asks: 'What is the PI of an anatomical pathologist?'

METHODS
A five-stage scoping review was performed. Medline, Global Health, and Embase were used to identify relevant studies. A team-based framework analysis approach was employed to interactively chart and synthesise data. Fifty-one studies were included in the analysis.

RESULTS
Anatomical pathologists PI encompasses four main domains: (1) Professional practice, (2) Views about the role, (3) Training and education, and (4) Personal implications. Pathologists define their PI through comparison with other specialties, and collaboration was perceived to enhance pathologists' role. Autopsy impacts pathologists' PI in their research, teaching, and governance roles, but dominates inaccurate pathologist stereotypes. Despite the potential significance of technology on pathologists' PI, excessive workloads were identified to limit pathologists' capacity to adopt them.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION
The professional identity of anatomical pathologists is complex, which may be underappreciated by medical students, junior doctors, and clinical colleagues. This highlights the importance of junior doctors receiving increased exposure to anatomical pathology in the workplace, to give them a realistic understanding of what being a pathologist means. Findings from this study may improve others' understanding of the significance pathologists play within healthcare, and help target junior doctors suited to anatomical pathology practice. This has the potential to increase pathology trainee recruitment, and help to minimise the pathologist workforce gap.

For details on our search strategy, scan here!

Anatomical pathologists' professional identities are complex:

