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?'

MFTHODS

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. Fiftyone 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:

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE





ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pathologists have multiple roles, including key responsibilities in diagnosis, laboratory governance, and trainee supervision.



PRACTICE OBSTACLES

High workloads cause communication breakdowns and increases in misdiagnoses, whilst managing clinician expectations, that diagnosis is easy, can be challenging.



VALUES, BELIEFS & ATTITUDES

Pathologists value collaboration because it offers the opportunity for clinical communication and skills development.



Pathologists identify autopsy as important in their role in research, and they believe research informs evidence-based practice.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Pathologists perceive a good work-life balance which is enhanced by technology by facilitating flexible working arrangements.



JOB SCOPE

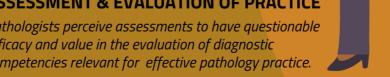
Pathologists uniquely contribute to patient care, although have difficulty in articulating what this entails.





ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION OF PRACTICE

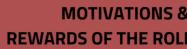
Pathologists perceive assessments to have questionable efficacy and value in the evaluation of diagnostic competencies relevant for effective pathology practice.





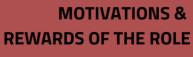
COMPARISON TO CLINICAL DISCIPLINES

Pathologists seem to identify their profession (including their training and education experiences) in comparison to other clinical areas of practice.



Pathologists enjoy the work they do, through an appreciation of science and being intellectually stimulated at work.







BEING A PATHOLOGIST

Pathologists identify to be a good

pathologist requires one to be a good

PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

