

DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY



Dr. Gilian Wharfe
Head of Department

The Department of Pathology has a staff complement of approximately 100 persons comprising Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Associate Lecturers, and other categories of staff comprising medical and laboratory technologists, miscellaneous administrative, secretarial and clerical staff, research nurse, medical photographers, laboratory attendants, and office attendants.

The Department's core work involves teaching, research and service and is carried out through the various subdepartments, namely, Anatomical Pathology (Autopsy, Cytogenetics, Cytology, Histology, Immuno-histochemistry), Chemical Pathology and Haematology (Blood Bank, Flow Cytometry and Routine Haematology).

The Department tries its best to supplement the limited UGC budget allocated through income generation efforts which mainly comprise outpatient fees. This still limits our ability to function as the majority of our fees are due from in-patients and this is not collected by UWI.

WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT

Laboratories and Autopsy Service

Due to financial constraints reagents and other important supplies are constantly not available, and this hampers the ability to earn revenue from laboratory services.

However, the laboratories and autopsy services continued to provide support for the care of in- and outpatients of the UHWI, as well as to patients from other medical facilities and institutions in Jamaica and the region.

The Histopathology Laboratory accessioned and processed 5,786 surgical cases which generated 29,352 tests (including routine histology and immunohistochemical requests). The Cytology Laboratory processed 3365 pap smears and 820 non-gynaecological cases. A total of 208 autopsies were performed, including 28 perinatal autopsies. The Chemical Pathology Laboratory performed a total of 610,194 tests while Routine Haematology Laboratory received and processed 71,920 specimens. The Blood Bank processed 3,872 blood donors and performed 23,876 tests.

Histology Lab – Introduction of New Technique

Ms Joyce Sterling, Medical Technologist, attended the 40th Annual National Society for Histotechnology Symposium/Convention, Austin, Texas, USA, August 2014, where she learnt a Frozen technique (Sandwich Method). The technique yields better quality sections and produces faster results which will allow for quicker turnaround time and greater efficiency. The technique has been taught to other Medical Technologists in the Histology Section and is to be included in the SOP manual as the method of choice for Frozen sections.

Laboratory Information System

Laboratory Information System (LIS) went live in February 2015 with three labs (Blood Bank, Haematology and Chemical Pathology) almost

fully utilizing the system while the other two (Histology and Cytology) are working on improving access to the system.

Accreditation

The process for accreditation of our laboratories continues but not without encumbrances. The preparation for accreditation of the laboratories in the Department of Pathology [from the Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC)] has been negatively impacted over the years due to the absence of an appointed quality manager and support from UWI management.

Mrs. Julene Smith-Valentine, Senior Medical Technologist in the Sub-Department of Haematology has been assisting with the preparation of documents such as the Quality and Safety Manuals. These documents are presently being reviewed. Application for accreditation is expected to be made by December 2015. Without accreditation we are unable to attract international collaborators on research projects.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Undergraduate Programmes

The Department continued to be very heavily involved in the teaching of all aspects and sub-specialties of Pathology in both Stages I and II of the MBBS programme. There were a record number of Elective students who came to the Department during their training.

Graduate Programmes

The DM Programmes in Pathology continue to be attractive necessitating a cap on enrollment with Anatomical Pathology having 17 enrolled. Five residents successfully completed the programmes and others are progressing well.

The DM Programme in Haematology/Oncology has twelve registered candidates while the DM in Chemical Pathology has one trainee.

Chemical Pathology introduced a PhD and a Master's programme.

Several members of staff were involved in the supervision and teaching of MPhil, MSc and PhD candidates.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Jamaica Cancer Registry

The registration of cancers continues, but has been hampered by the decrease in complement of registrars from two to one, as the post which became vacant in January 2014. Efforts are being made to employ a new registrar.

International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) commitments

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has invited cancer registries to submit incidence data for the eleventh volume of "Cancer Incidence in Five Continents", which will cover the 5-year period 2008–2012, and the registry has been verifying and compiling the necessary data for this submission.

The data verification process for our 2008–2012 cases will also facilitate the compilation of the 2008–2012 5-year incidence report for submission to the *West Indian Medical Journal*.

Research

The JCR continues to support the Elective programme in the undergraduate M.B.,B.S. curriculum, accommodating medical students, who participate in supervised research projects. The projects completed during the period August 1, 2014–July 31, 2015, are listed below, along with the names of the participating students:

- **October 2014**

Trends in incidence, age-distribution and histological subtype of endometrial cancer in Kingston and St. Andrew (KSA), Jamaica over the 20-year period (1988-2007).