

## Histopathology Elective at York Hospital

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I am honoured to be a recipient of the BDIAP medical student elective bursary and would like to say a very big thank you to the members of the BDIAP for their support. I dream of becoming a histopathologist and have been looking forward to this 8-week elective with a view to spending time learning about aspects of pathology which do not feature heavily in the general medical training programme.

I chose York for my elective as it is my home city also it offered a different experience in the field than previously gained at Newcastle RVI. Thankfully Dr Matthew Toy became my supervisor. Being a district general hospital, York has a small histopathology department of 6 fantastic consultants and a very friendly team of laboratory staff to support them. Everyone was happy to have me around and from day one I felt like I was part of the team. The majority of my time was spent with Matthew, but also with Dr Izzat Abdul Kadir. Together they gave me a unique insight into what life is like working as a histopathologist in a district general hospital setting for which I am hugely grateful.

General pathology is fascinating and a perfect place to start for a relative novice as I have been privileged to see hundreds of patient samples and learn a little bit about lots of different types of specimens. Initially, we would talk through samples together as they were reported, then I would be given a few cases to look at in more detail which we would review and report on at the end of the day. I found this particularly challenging and tiring at the beginning, but it was so rewarding near the end of the placement when I had been able to suggest the correct diagnosis on a number of occasions.

MDT meetings gave structure to my weeks. I was invited to attend the breast, gynaecology, and cancer of unknown primary meetings. I found that this process brought the focus back to the patients and highlighted the hugely important role histopathology plays in the accurate diagnosis and management of the condition. It was clear to see how much the clinicians valued and respected the guidance of the pathologist.

The mortuary is also a great learning environment and I was lucky enough to benefit from time spent there. The opportunity to observe numerous post-mortems has improved my anatomical knowledge tremendously and helped to solidify my understanding of basic common disease processes. There is also something exciting about the problem solving involved in pin-pointing the cause of death!

The York department has recently started training two histopathology advanced practitioners, so my mentors and I decided that it may be beneficial for the trainees and me to give them a series of tutorials. I was able to teach them some basic histopathology and discuss some of the clinical experiences I have had in my medical training so far. I hope this has enhanced their understanding of how some of the samples they receive are obtained from patients and the clinical reasons why they were taken. I found this aspect of my elective rewarding and found it helped clarify and express the limits of my own knowledge.

This elective greatly complemented my clinical knowledge as I can now appreciate many of the reasons for taking biopsies and have gained a good understanding of the processing of samples in histology. This will enable me to give better explanations to patients, complete helpful request forms and will assist me in interpreting histology reports in the future.

I have really loved my histopathology elective. I cannot wait to get some more experience to further develop my knowledge and skills and hopefully become a histopathology trainee in the near future!

