

COVID-19 Redeployment Experience

I am an ST5 Histopathology registrar training in London. During the COVID-19 pandemic I was redeployed to work at the Nightingale Hospital in London, one of the emergency hospitals set up to treat COVID-19 patients. Along with several other consultants, trainee histopathologists and mortuary technicians, our skillsets were put to good use in setting up and running a mortuary and death certification unit. Although the Nightingale ultimately treated smaller numbers of patients than expected, we were required to set the unit up with the intention to treat up to 4000 patients: quite a daunting task. As a trainee, this gave me a valuable experience in the complexities of hospital management. At a personal level, I was closely involved with the impact of the virus on bereaved relatives and friends of the deceased.

I was also due to sit FRCPATH Part 2 this spring. Progressing through The Royal College exams is renowned for being one of the pinnacles of stress in a pathologist's career and for me, as for many exam candidates, a great deal of uncertainty still remains. Exam preparation in a time of social distancing, reduced workload and cancelled revision courses is an unexpected additional challenge. The FRCPATH exams are scheduled to go ahead in the Autumn, although the effects of COVID-19 on their potential format remains indefinite. Exam cancellations are undoubtedly insignificant in comparison to the many devastating impacts of COVID-19, but this nonetheless highlights how the pandemic has impacted lives in a multitude of ways.