



## CORONIAL AUTOPSY STUDY

National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD)

### ORGANISATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

Location of Mortuary \_\_\_\_\_

Who completed this questionnaire?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

#### What is this study about?

NCEPOD will be assessing the quality of coronial autopsy reports requested by coroners under the England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey & Isle of Man coronial systems. Autopsy reports will be assessed using a pre-designed questionnaire, based on the Royal College of Pathologists Guidelines for Autopsy Practice (2002), and the where applicable the Coroners Rules 1984

As part of the study, we are interested in identifying the mortuary facilities available to pathologists, and how they might impact on the quality of autopsy reports.

Data will be collected retrospectively over a one week period from England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. Both hospital and public mortuaries will be included.

The work is supported by the Coroners' Society of England and Wales and The Royal College of Pathologists.

#### Who should complete this questionnaire?

The manager responsible for the mortuary and its facilities should complete this questionnaire. If necessary, he/she may wish to consult the pathologists in answering some of the questions.

Each mortuary will be required to complete one organisational questionnaire. If you do not feel able to complete this questionnaire, please pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform NCEPOD.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the

#### How to complete this questionnaire

This form will be electronically scanned. **Please use a black or blue pen.** Please complete all questions with either block capitals or a bold cross inside the boxes provided e.g.

Does the mortuary keep a record of autopsies?

Yes       No       Unknown

If you make a mistake, please 'black-out' the box and re-enter the correct information, e.g.

Does this mortuary accept paediatric cases?

Yes       No       Unknown

**Unless indicated, please mark only one box per question.** Where <sup>(def)</sup> is indicated, a definition is provided on the back of the questionnaire.

Free space is provided on the last page for your comments.

Incomplete questionnaires may be followed up.

#### Questions or help

If you have any queries about the study or this questionnaire, please contact

Tel: 0207 920 0999 or email:  
[coronialautopsy@ncepod.org.uk](mailto:coronialautopsy@ncepod.org.uk)

## A – The mortuary

1. a. Is the mortuary within hospital premises?  Yes  No
- b. Is it run by the hospital  Yes  No
- c. Is it a Local Authority public mortuary?  Yes  No
- d. Is it a combined hospital and public mortuary?  Yes  No

*(Answers may be multiple)*

2. How many coronial autopsies<sup>(def)</sup> were performed in the mortuary between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005? *(All ages)*

3. a. Does the mortuary keep a record of autopsies?  Yes  No
- b. If yes, how is this stored?  
*(Answers may be multiple)*
- Computer
- Hand written (e.g. log book)
- Other *(please specify)*

Unknown

4. a. How are instructions for autopsy usually given to the pathologist?
- Written
- Orally
- Combination of oral and written
- Unknown
- b. By whom is the usually instruction given? *(Please specify)*

5. Which of the following age groups are autopsied in the mortuary? *(Answers may be multiple)*
- Under 1 year old
- 1 – 5 years old
- 6 – 15 years old
- Adult (16 and over)

6. a. When was the mortuary originally built?      Unknown  
y y y y
- b. When was the mortuary last refurbished? (If applicable)      Unknown  
y y y y

7. a. Does the mortuary have on site shower facilities?  Yes  No
- b. Does the mortuary have an on site changing room?  Yes  No

8. What clothing do pathologists wear when performing autopsies? (Answers may be multiple)  Protective clothing over surgical scrubs  
 Protective clothing over day clothes  
 Other (please specify)

**B – Protocols and procedure**

9. a. Are there written protocols in place for autopsy performance?  Yes  No  Unknown
- b. If yes, who does this apply to?  Pathologists  
 Anatomical pathology technicians  
 Both

10. a. Please indicate if any of the following high risk infectious autopsies<sup>(def)</sup> are performed within the mortuary, and whether written protocols are in place for performing these?

	Autopsy performed		Written protocol in place	
Hepatitis B	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Hepatitis C	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Human Immunodeficiency Virus	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Tuberculosis	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

b. If the answer to any of the above autopsy's performed is no, please specify why.

11. Does the mortuary have Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA)<sup>(def)</sup> or equivalent?  Yes  No  Unknown

12. Is it mandatory in your mortuary that a pathologist sees a body before evisceration takes place?  Yes  No  Unknown

**C – Staffing**

13. a. How many pathologists used the mortuary in the last calendar year? (*April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2005*) (*All grades*)

b. Is this an estimate? (*If applicable*)  Yes  No

14. a. How many coronial jurisdictions used this mortuary in the last calendar year?) (*To include coroners, deputies and assistant deputies*) (*April 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2005*)

15. How many whole time equivalent anatomical pathology technicians (APT) or other personnel<sup>(def)</sup> (e.g. MLA, ATO) assist with autopsy examinations?

16. Who does evisceration of most of the bodies?  Pathologist  
 Anatomical pathology technician  
 Other (*Please specify*)

## D – Equipment

17. Are bodies measured for height?  Yes  No
- 
18. Are all bodies weighed?  Yes  No
- 
19. Does the mortuary have organ scales?  Yes  No
- 
20. Does the mortuary have access to an electric skull saw?  Yes  No
- 
21. Does the mortuary have, or have ready access to, X-ray equipment on site?  Yes  No

## E – Facilities

22. a. Does the mortuary or pathologist have, or have ready access to, facilities to process:
- Histology<sup>(def)</sup>  Yes  No
- Toxicology<sup>(def)</sup>  Yes  No
- Other Laboratory investigations<sup>(def)</sup>  Yes  No
- b. If yes to any of the above, is there a documented chain of custody for samples as they are processed for the pathologist?  Yes  No
- c. If yes, please give details.

d. If there are any problems with the chain of custody, please give details.

- 
23. a. Does the mortuary have formalin for fixation?  Yes  No
- b. Does the mortuary have storage facilities for fixed tissues and organs?  Yes  No
- 

24. Is there a separate suite/room for high risk infectious autopsies?  Yes  No  
 Not applicable
- 

25. Is there an office area for pathologists to write up or dictate notes?  Yes  No
- 

26. a. Is lighting in the mortuary adequate?  Yes  No  Unknown  
*(As judged by the majority of users)*
- b. Are there additional spotlights for more detailed examination?  Yes  No
- 

27. a. What is the total number of tables for eviscerating bodies in the mortuary?
- b. Are there separate organ dissecting tables?  Yes  No
- 

28. Does the mortuary have moving air ventilation with temperature control?  Yes  No
- 

29. Does the mortuary have viewing facilities for clinicians?  Yes  No
-

**PLEASE WRITE CLEARLY ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT YOU FEEL IS RELEVANT ABOUT YOUR MORTUARY**

**DEFINITIONS**

<p><b>Coronial autopsy</b></p>	<p>An autopsy conducted at the direction of the coroner, to identify the cause of death, and determine, or assist in determining, whether the death was natural or unnatural. This will include forensic post mortems. Consent of the family is not required.</p> <p>(<a href="http://www.the-shipman-inquiry.org.uk">http://www.the-shipman-inquiry.org.uk</a> July 2003)</p>
<p><b>High risk infectious autopsy</b></p>	<p>For example, HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.</p>
<p><b>CPA accredited</b></p>	<p>The mortuary has undergone an external audit of the ability to provide a service of high quality by declaring a defined standard of practice, which is confirmed by peer review.”</p> <p>(<a href="http://www.cpa-uk.co.uk/">http://www.cpa-uk.co.uk/</a> 2005)</p>
<p><b>Other Personnel</b></p>	<p>Examples include:  MLO – medical laboratory assistant  ATO – Assistant Technical Officer</p>

<p><b>Histology</b></p>	<p>‘The study of the minute structure of the tissues.’ (Black’s Medical Dictionary. 36<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1990)</p> <p>‘As best practice, sampling of all major organs for histology in all autopsies is recommended’ (The Royal College of Pathologists; <i>Guidelines on Autopsy Practice. Report of a working group of the Royal College of Pathologists.</i> September 2002)</p>
<p><b>Toxicology</b></p>	<p>‘The science dealing with poisons’ (Blacks Medical Dictionary. 36<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1990)</p> <p>The sampling of fluids or tissue samples for the evaluation of medical drugs and drugs of substance abuse</p>
<p><b>Other Laboratory investigations</b></p>	<p>To include microbiology, virology and immunology.</p> <p>Microbiology: ‘The branch of biology concerned with the study of micro-organisms.’ (Blacks Medical Dictionary. 36<sup>th</sup> Ed. 1990)</p> <p>Virology: ‘The study of virus’s and viral disease’ (<a href="http://www.amfar.org">http://www.amfar.org</a>. 2005)</p> <p>Immunology: ‘The study of the bodies immune system and it’s functions and disorders.’ (<a href="http://www.mccg.org">http://www.mccg.org</a>. 2004)</p> <p>For example, blood tests for viral infections and mast cell tryptase.</p>

NCEPOD  
Epworth House  
25 City Road  
London EC1Y 1AA

