

# 13. PATHOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The sample for analysis was small, only 85 autopsy reports available from 1,818 deaths in the study, and hence the conclusions to be drawn are more limited, in comparison with recent NCEPOD reports. These looked at a 10% sample of all perioperative deaths up to 30 days following surgery<sup>1</sup>, and all perioperative deaths up to three days following surgery<sup>2</sup>, which reviewed 350 and 500 autopsy reports respectively.

The standards used for assessing autopsy reports were the 1993 Royal College of Pathologists guidelines<sup>3</sup>, although in the qualitative assessment of quality, note was also made of the more recently issued Royal College Guidelines for Autopsy Practice<sup>4</sup>, which were issued midway through the time of the study. Also the advisors were familiar with the recent NCEPOD reports on autopsy report quality, and focussed on quality issues that have been repeatedly emphasised in these reports for more than a decade.