

# 11. Pathology

## Autopsy rate

18% (8/44) of the autopsies followed clinicians' interest and consent from relatives, but the majority (80%, 35/44) were performed on instruction from a coroner. The remaining one was unable to be classified. The overall proportion of autopsies among the patients dying on ICUs (16%) is less than the current national average of 23% of all deaths<sup>44</sup>. Whilst patients on ICUs are perhaps more likely to have known underlying pathology compared with many deaths in the community, the experience of this patient data set as well as published and personal experience indicate that the autopsy on ICU patients presents many surprises<sup>45</sup>. The revealed clinical pathology and comparison with the presumed pathology is often useful in formulating policy changes in ICU management. More consented autopsies should be sought from this important patient population.