

ALEXANDER KOLAR BMedSci (Hons) MBBS FRCPath MFFLM
Forensic Pathologist

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Professional Profile

A Forensic Pathologist on the Home Office Register

Academic Qualifications

BMedSci (Hons) 1998 – Bachelor of Medical Science with Honours, Forensic Pathology 2:1

(University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne)

MBBS 2001 – Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne)

MRCPath 2006 Member and now Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists by examination in Forensic Pathology.

Forensic Science Career

March 2008 to present: Forensic Pathologist on the Home Office Register, combined Group Practice of Greater London, South East and West Midlands.

November 2003 to March 2008: Specialist Registrar in Forensic Pathology, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

August 2002 to November 2003: Senior House Officer in Histopathology, Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust

August 2001 to August 2002: Surgery, Bishop Auckland General Hospital

I commenced histopathology training in August 2002 as a Senior House Officer in Edinburgh and forensic pathology training in November 2003 as a Specialist Registrar in Sheffield. My training in forensic pathology was based at the Department of Forensic Pathology at the Medico-Legal Centre, Sheffield within the South Yorkshire and South Humber Deanery but also included experience working with individuals outside of the region. This training programme followed the Royal College of Pathologists curriculum and in addition to dedicated training in forensic pathology, included training in neuropathology, paediatric pathology and histopathology as applied to forensic pathology.

Following examination in forensic pathology in November 2006, I became a member of the Royal College of Pathologists (MRCPath) in January 2007. I was elected a founding member of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (MFFLM (Foundation)) in 2007 and became a fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists (FRCPath) in January 2008. I was awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training by the Post Graduate Medical Education Board in forensic pathology on the 2nd February 2008 and was admitted to the Specialist Register held by General Medical Council on the same date. I was included on the Home Office List of Pathologists on the 29th February 2008.

Prior to admission to the Home Office list, as part of a group of pathologists I provided a 'routine' Coronial autopsy service to HM Coroner for South Yorkshire (West). During this time, I performed approximately 1,000 "routine" Coroner's cases, including a wide variety of sudden natural deaths, hospital deaths and a variety of non-natural deaths including 'high risk cases'. This has helped me to gain a broad range of experience in the interpretation of gross pathological appearances and appreciation of different autopsy techniques.

Dr ALEXANDER KOLAR
Forensic Pathologist

Since March 2008 I have worked as a forensic pathologist on the Home Office (England and Wales) register with colleagues in the West Midlands and northern parts of the Thames Valley, providing a suspicious death investigation service for Staffordshire, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Midlands and West Mercia Police Forces. This area is one of the larger rotation areas in England and Wales covering a population of over five million people and geographic area of over 5,000 square miles. The practice area includes the major conurbation of the West Midlands (Birmingham, West Bromwich, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Coventry) as well as rural areas such as Herefordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. The result is a wide case mix and has given me experience and developed my expertise in the major types of suspicious death investigation.

I have experience in the handling of the forensic pathological investigation of all types of homicide and within the last four years I have been involved in the investigation of around 40 to 50 cases of homicide per year. These have included deaths related to firearms, stabbing, pressure to the neck, rape-homicide, concealed homicides, blunt trauma, neglect, suicide-homicide, skeletalised remains, head injury, exhumation and the occasional bodiless murder. I am proficient and competent in the performance of these examinations to standards expected by the Home Office and Royal College of Pathologists.

A significant proportion of my case workload involves the examination of suspicious death scenes developing my practical skills in this area. I have experience in body recovery and retrieval including where health and safety may be compromised. In addition, my workload includes investigation of sudden and unexpected death in childhood and infancy including non-accidental injury, sudden unexplained death in infants and starvation.

My role as a forensic pathologist means I must be able to collaborate successfully with colleagues and teams also involved in the investigation of suspicious deaths, for example paediatric pathologists, forensic anthropologists and neuropathologists. I also have experience in the appropriate use of ancillary investigations such as radiology, toxicology, microbiology, and biochemistry and skills and experience in microscopic examination and diagnosis of both unnatural and natural disease as related to forensic pathology and non-forensic histopathology.

As well as the primary investigation of deaths for police forces, I am instructed by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (a body which investigates issues relating to police handling of cases, such as deaths in custody) and solicitors acting on behalf of defendants. I also examine live victims of assault, both in person or through photographs, in order to provide expert opinion.

I have been involved in the re-investigation of historic cases, including the re-examination of remains. In particular, I became the lead pathologist in Operation Bead, an investigation into the retention of organs and materials in hospitals and police stations following suspicious death autopsies, some cases being over 50 years in age. This process involved me reviewing around 40 complete cases and providing recommendations for case management. Similar discoveries nationally following our cases were identified, and the model utilised by myself became the recommended model.

I have provided evidence to Coroners, Crown and Family Courts. I have undertaken expert witness training and I am aware of the roles and responsibilities of an expert witness.

I am familiar with the performing high-risk autopsies and the precautions required for the protection of mortuary workers.

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I participate in the 'Continuing Professional Development' (CPD) scheme of the Royal College of Pathologists. Colleagues and I participate in audit with formal cross checking of reports for quality purposes.

Any other relevant information

I am the Chair of the Specialist Advisory Committee for Forensic Pathology at the Royal College of Pathologists. This committee has oversight for the training and standards that the College maintains. It involves liaison with other specialities and legal authorities. As a result, I sit on Home Office and Forensics Science Regulator committees.

I am currently an auditor for the Forensic Science Regulator's audit on Forensic Pathology.

I am a trained appraiser. I now undertake a number of appraisals every year on forensic pathologists as part of the revalidation process and report to the Responsible Officer for forensic pathology. I participate in ongoing redevelopment of the scheme as required.

I am an associate editor for Medicine, Science and the Law.

I have co-edited the recently published, "Mason's Forensic Medicine for Lawyers", 6th Edition and chapters in other books (published and awaiting publication).

I am an examiner for the Royal College of Pathologists in the field of forensic pathology.

I have been an assessor for article 14 applications in the sub-speciality of forensic pathology for the Royal College of Pathologists. These are applications to have overseas training recognised by the GMC and Royal College of Pathologists.