



Newsletter

Issue No. 4
June 2008

ACHIEVING HIGH QUALITY CARE FOR ALL.

Prof. Lord Darzi of Denham has recently released a report entitled "High Quality Care For All". It is an important report that has implications for the whole of healthcare and just for healthcare science. In its preface the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, says:

"Lord Darzi's report is a tremendous opportunity to build an NHS that provides truly world class services for all. It requires government to be serious about reform, committed to trusting frontline staff and ready to invest in new services and new ways of delivering services."

I am certain that few in the NHS would disagree with this statement and the report sets out both a vision for the future and ideas and proposals on how that vision can be achieved.

Do you want to initiate change? When most healthcare scientists are asked this question, the answer is usually yes. When asked "how are you going to achieve change?" most really do not know. The Voluntary Registration process is all about change. It's about taking the things that Lord Darzi proposes in his report forward; it's about improving standards and delivering quality services to the public. It's about you committing yourself to the professional practices and principles associated with registration. By joining VRC you are signalling your intention to initiate change.

Terry Johnson - VRC Chair



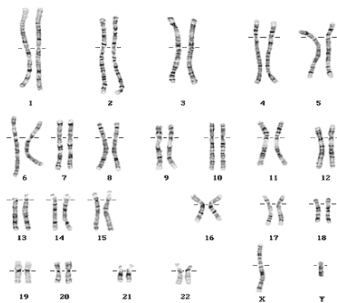
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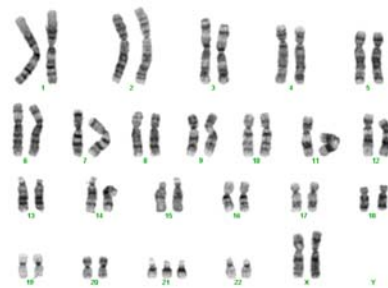


Genetic Technologists - Cytogenetics

Cytogenetics is the study of chromosomes and the related disease states caused by abnormal chromosome number and/or structure. Chromosomes are complex structures located in the cell nucleus; they are basically the "packages" that contain the DNA. Normal human somatic cells have 46 chromosomes: 22 pairs of autosomes (chromosomes 1-22) and two sex chromosomes. This is called the diploid number; females carry two X chromosomes (46,XX) while males have an X and a Y (46,XY). In the simplest case, chromosomes are examined and characterized by obtaining an individual's karyotype, which is a description of the number and structure of the chromosomes. Chromosomal abnormalities can be diverse and numerous and can cause early embryonic death, congenital defects, development of cancer, and infertility. A broad knowledge base is necessary in order to understand and diagnose this important class of diseases.



46,XY – Apparently normal male



47,XX,+21 – Female with Down's Syndrome



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Association for
Clinical Cytogenetics

Cytogenetics is a highly specialized discipline; duties include cell culture, harvesting, slide making and G-banding for subsequent microscopic analysis. It also involves computer image analysis, karyotyping and report generation.

Cytogenetic Technologists work side by side with Clinical Scientists, mainly taking responsibility for the preparation and analysis of chromosomal materials.

The Associated Genetic Technologists Committee (AGTC) was formed in 2004 and includes Genetic Technologist members from both the Association of Clinical Cytogenetics (ACC) and the Clinical Molecular Genetics Society (CMGS). The AGTC is ratified as an official committee by both professional bodies and is represented on both executive committees and training boards. It is hoped the AGTC can take the lead on all matters pertaining to genetic technical staff.

We are currently updating our lab contacts list and should have a named Technologist in each lab that will disseminate any updates from the AGTC to their colleagues.

Updates and all information relating to registration can also be found at the following websites:

http://www.cytogenetics.org.uk/tech/agtc_homepage.htm

<http://www.vrcouncil.org/pages/agtc.html>

Michelle Fenlon,

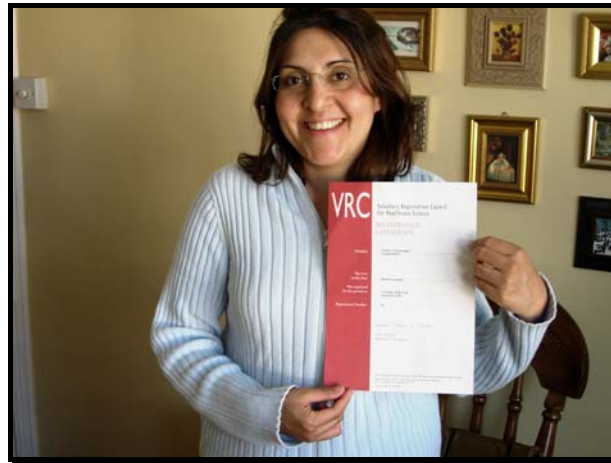
AGTC Secretary

VRC Company Secretary

VRC Scrutiniser.

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*Registrant's story:
Mireille Coumine – Genetic Technologist – Guy's Hospital.*



At last, recognition!

In 1994 I embarked on my cytogenetic journey as a Medical Technical Officer II (MTO2) at the Kennedy Galton Centre, Northwick Park Hospital. Upon employment I was trained under a local laboratory programme that involved 12 months in the prenatal section and 12 months in the blood section. As well as finding this training very interesting and enjoyable it certainly gave me a good grounding as an MTO in cytogenetics.

I was given the opportunity to learn how to karyotype, cutting out chromosomes and pairing them up and it was then that I fell in love with my job. In my second year I started to wonder about my prospects as a technician. I knew that I was useful working alongside clinical scientists providing technical support, but I didn't feel that there was potential to progress.

Having worked for 2 years as an MTO, in 1996, I went to Montreal, Canada and worked for 18 months as a research technician looking into

the effects of interferon on hepatitis C carriers. It was during my time in Montreal that I realised that I missed my role as a cytogenetic technologist. Fortunately, I was offered my job back at the Kennedy Galton Centre and I decided that it was up to me to progress as a technologist anyway I could. I attended seminars that were appropriate for me as an MTO, made sure I participated in journal clubs and made myself heard at meetings.

In 2000, I decided once again I was due a change. Not a change of job however but change of location. I applied to Guy's as an MTO 2 and I was offered a position. Once again I challenged myself to progress as an MTO. I did this by participating in journal clubs, fortnightly meetings, attended courses that would assist me in my day to day role as a technician and seminars that were open to both MTO's and clinical scientists. Having demonstrated that I was a competent and productive microscopist, and able to take on more responsibility, in 2002 my efforts were rewarded and I was appointed as specimen reception supervisor; this resulted in my upgrade to MTO 3 in June 2003. This was a major achievement for me at the time but I felt what was really needed was a formal route for progression in the profession. At last, I feel that the introduction of registration will be offering technologists a proper career structure.

For me being able to register has brought a whole new meaning to my job. Now that my application for registration has been accepted, I feel that my work as a Genetic Technologist is recognised professionally in its own right. At last we are being considered as true professionals with official training and education being an integral part of our development in order to practice according to defined standards of proficiency and scope of professional practice.

The benefits of being registered do not only apply to us as technologists but now the public can be assured protection from varying standards of practice across the country and can have peace of mind that we are offering them an excellent service.

In order to register I had to fill up a rather lengthy application form. The part that took up a lot of my time was the report. However, I concentrated on each section at a time, using the guidance notes provided to help me. Over the years I have filed and documented all my training and courses attended. It helped tremendously to have this information at hand when filling up the form.

I was eager to submit my application as soon as I could. I have been waiting almost ten years for something like the VRC to exist where the status of GTs would be considered to be as important as other registered professions. I now feel that my individual status as a Genetic Technologist has also increased.

I would encourage other technologists to submit their applications for registration as soon as possible. By doing this we will be offered a clear and well defined structure to following the Genetic Technologist career pathway.



It is important to remember that you do not have to belong to a Professional Body to apply for registration via VRC.

Application forms are available via the VRC website <http://www.vrcouncil.org/>
Or directly from

Executive Business Support Ltd
Suite 4, Sovereign House
22 Gate Lane
Boldmere
Sutton Coldfield.
B73 5TT

T: 0845 838 6267
F: 0121 355 2420
E: vrccouncil@execbs.com
W www.vrcouncil.org

The fee for a new application is £45. To view the full list of charges please visit the website or see below.

VRC has been set up to provide a stepping-stone for healthcare science professions aspiring toward formal regulation via the Health Professions Council (HPC).

VRC is delighted to accept applications for registration from the 6 following professions

Anatomical Pathology Technologists

Cytotechnologists

Critical Care Technologists

Genetic Technologists

Diabetic Retinal Screeners

Ophthalmic Science Practitioners

British Association of Tissue Bankers

Fee	Details	Amount
Registration	Initial Application	£45.00
Incomplete Registration	Minor Omittances For example documents or cheque are unsigned	£20.00
Incomplete Registration	Major Omittances For example, the application is returned by the assessor requesting further information	£35.00
Renewal Fees		£25.00
Late Renewals		£50.00
Registration Reactivation		£50.00
Replacement Certificates		£5.00