

Involvement of Paediatric Pathologists in Coronial Investigations in UK

In England & Wales, regular Paediatric Pathologist input into the Coronial investigation of infant and child deaths has varied from area to area. I was involved in these inquiries in Oxfordshire from 1974, but not in surrounding Coronial areas until 1982. Paediatric Pathologist involvement in these cases became much more widespread following the publication of the report of the Royal Colleges Working Group [Kennedy report] in 2004. Although the Working Group was looking at the investigation of infant deaths, Paediatric Pathologist input into the investigation of sudden deaths in older children became usual.

In Northern Ireland, there was some Paediatric Pathologist involvement in Coronial investigations in the '80's and '90's, but it was not routine. There was more regular involvement from 2001, but it was not until 2008 that a joint approach using Forensic and Paediatric Pathologists was established.

In Scotland, facilitated by rules of evidence, it became usual for a joint Forensic/Paediatric approach in suspicious infant/child deaths from the early 1990's.

Report of a Working Group: Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy. 2004. London; Royal College of Pathologists, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

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