



Finding the best way to best practise

Procuring a new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) gave Path Links an opportunity to review the methods of generating of histopathology reports. The organisation provides pathology services for approximately one million Lincolnshire residents. Under the guidance of Dr John Kershaw, then consultant histopathologist in Path Links and most recently Medical Director for North Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust, a specification to meet current quality standards for pathology cancer reporting was produced. Upon discovering none of the available LIMS met the specification, Path Links turned to AES Medical for help.



The path to intelligent software solutions

AES Medical worked in partnership with John and his team to deliver a compliant solution that would also be time and cost effective. Critical to achieving this was an understanding of the pressures faced by laboratory professionals and the long-term benefits of reforms that match the vision of the Calman-Hine report. AES Medical employs a number of experienced ex-pathology laboratory professionals and utilises significant consultant pathologist input into the design of the software. Having designed PathoSys[®] - pathology data management software – their expertise was crucial in adapting the system to meet Path Links' needs.

Helping the net work

Interfaced with the existing LIMS, PathoSys[®] was trialled by histopathologists reporting on colorectal cancers. The user-friendly system made it simple for staff to communicate with other professionals concerned with the treatment and care of patients. Audits showed a significant improvement in compliance with the national minimum dataset for colorectal cancer.

Consultant surgeons welcomed the enhanced consistency of reporting and clarity of information – a product of rule-based staging and coding systems. As well as automatically generating text reports for clinical users, AES Medical's tailored module stored all trial data in a relational database. Easy to interrogate, the database encouraged clinical audits and formed the basis for a number of ongoing research projects. Histopathologists also benefited from the quick and easy transfer of electronic data. They were able to supply the Trent Regional Cancer Registry with pathology cancer data in the required form and at the desired frequency.

Saving time and money

The trial of the bespoke system has been so successful that histopathologists at Path Links have readily accepted it as a direct reporting tool. By adding specialist cancer reporting software to the LIMS, Path Links has improved the quality of histopathology reporting whilst saving valuable time and money.

Dr Kershaw's assessment of the system is that "PathoSys[®] has been found to be really useful as a reporting tool both by my colleagues in pathology and by referring surgeons who like the clarity of reports. I particularly like the ease of interrogation of the system which affords exiting possibilities for both clinical audit and research".