

The Royal College of Radiologists submission of 5 October 2023

PE1911/RR: Review of Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 as it relates to post mortems

1. We acknowledge the correspondence from the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee dated 27 September 2023. Please find our response below.
2. The Royal College of Radiologists is the UK's professional membership body for clinical radiologists, interventional radiologists, and clinical oncologists. Clinical radiologists are specialist doctors who interpret medical images to diagnose, treat and monitor diseases and injuries. They do this using a range of imaging techniques, including X-ray, ultrasound, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET) and molecular imaging. Some radiologists are interventional radiologists (IR); these doctors perform image-guided surgical interventions, often replacing traditional open operations.
3. Clinical oncologists are specialist doctors who treat cancer with drugs (systemic anti-cancer therapies) and radiotherapy. They are the only medical professionals in the UK who can prescribe radiotherapy treatments.
4. We are pleased to respond to the Committee's request for a response with regards to petition PE1911: review of Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 as it relates to post-mortems.
5. The RCR has previously produced in 2021, in collaboration with the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH), clinical guidelines relating to the use of CT scans in post-mortem examinations. These guidelines are publicly [available on our website](#) and a PDF copy is also attached to our email.
6. Please consult the guidance document to find out more about the RCR's and RCPATH's recommendations for the scope and

limitations of this service; the standards that ought to be employed; and the relevant training and qualifications required.

7. The guidance affirms the value of the use of cross-sectional imaging, particularly CT scans, during post-mortem examinations in providing additional information to the coroner or medical examiner. For example, it can be of significant value in cases of death by major trauma. However, there are also causes of death that cannot be reliably diagnosed by cross-sectional imaging alone.
8. The guidance was designed to be applicable to all four nations of the UK. It is our view that there should be in principle no reason that CT scans could not be used during post-mortem examinations in Scotland.
9. The guidance notes that, at the time of writing, the availability of expertise in post-mortem cross-sectional imaging interpretation was limited to a small number of centres in the UK.
10. Please note that the guidelines specifically do **not** apply where criminal proceedings are in prospect (forensic examinations).
11. If you have any questions on the specifics of the contents of the guideline document, the authors would be best placed to answer you; they are listed on page one of the document. However, we would be very happy to address any general questions you may have arising from this guidance.