

A decision made on the basis of ignorance, cheap economics, or for political expediency is unlikely to be a good decision. It is for this reason that I want to make you aware of something of profound significance to our profession that has the potential to change the regulatory status of biomedical scientists. I am referring to the current Department of Health consultation "Promoting professionalism, reforming regulation".

This consultation is seeking views on proposals for far-reaching reforms to the regulation of UK health professionals and the statutory bodies through which the regulatory process is delivered. The aim is to "simplify, streamline and modernise" and reduce the current nine regulators down to three or four. In addition, it is seeking views on proposals for regulation to be related to risk, thereby bringing some professions into statutory regulation that are currently absent and to potentially de-regulate others in favour of some form of voluntary regulation, where this is felt to provide a more proportionate level of patient protection.

I feel this is a consultation that has considerable merit in many of its proposals. However, I do not want to see the regulatory future of biomedical scientists determined by a system that has the potential to under-recognise the scope of our profession. I worry that our significance in healthcare delivery could be under-recognised by assessment

REGULATION



Members are urged to read a regulation consultation and safeguard the future of the profession.

criteria that do not adequately accommodate us and are more reflective of the therapy-orientated professions. I worry that this could be used to change the regulatory status of biomedical scientists to deliver some notional political objective. It is for this reason that I am appealing to our profession to read this consultation and to respond. I want to ensure that the outcome will enable the scope and impact that biomedical scientists have on the patient care pathways to be fully recognised.

We have 22,000 registrants, whose roles include reporting, analysis, interpretation of results, and providing expert input to multi-disciplinary team meetings in the course of handling 150 million samples each year. I think there is a considerable risk potential, as did the powers that decreed almost 60 years ago that medical laboratory technicians should be

regulated by statute. Our roles and title have evolved considerably in the intervening time in way that has increased our level of responsibility and, therefore, our potential risk.

Words cannot adequately convey the strength of my feeling on the importance of this consultation and the impact its outcome could have on us. I urge everyone to ensure that the regulatory future of our profession is determined from an informed perspective by responding to this consultation. We cannot allow the "back room service" misconception to determine our regulatory future.

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