

THE BIG QUESTION

THIS MONTH WE ASK

“Does biomedical science still represent a career for life?”



Chris Chase

Pathology Training Manager
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals
NHS Trust

Absolutely, yes. With more and more clinical decisions being made from the information gathered from laboratory testing, there will always be a need for biomedical scientists.

That is not to say that the job will not change – with the introduction of automation, robotics and artificial intelligence, biomedical science is at the forefront of advances in technology, and with a greater diagnostic use of molecular biology and genomics, job roles will undoubtedly change, with a greater emphasis on the science.

With the traditional boundaries that are being broken down within healthcare science, such as in advanced practitioner roles within cellular pathology and equivalence routes, there is now a greater opportunity for career development for biomedical scientists.

There are many routes now open for biomedical scientists to follow – education and training, quality, higher management, or advanced scientific roles. These routes to progression are very clear and prescriptive and with a wide range of postgraduate qualifications now available, career progression should be not too arduous for ambitious scientists, provided the appropriate resources and supportive mechanisms are available.

The work biomedical scientists do now and will do in the future is vital within the healthcare environment and opportunities within the profession will only increase and yes, biomedical science can be a career for life. It has been for me.

IMAGE: ISTOCK



Ian Davies

Healthcare Science Course Leader
Staffordshire University

In short, yes. But it is an interesting question that opens up discussions about roles of biomedical scientists across healthcare and beyond.

Firstly, I suppose it depends what your vision of a biomedical scientist is. Traditionally, we undertake laboratory-based diagnostics, and that role will certainly continue to be a pivotal and exciting area of practice, as test repertoires increase and the possibilities of the genomic era expand.

Importantly though, we need not confine ourselves to that role and must consider the skills and knowledge that biomedical scientist education brings and how we can apply these across the wider healthcare and life sciences sector – for example product development, management and public health.

Using myself as an example, my background is as a biomedical scientist within an NHS clinical chemistry department. A few years ago, I decided that I wanted to change focus and began a journey into academia – although I am no longer on the “laboratory bench”, I use the knowledge, behaviours and skills of a biomedical scientist every day, whether it be in delivering education, identifying research opportunities or counselling students. I identify primarily as a biomedical scientist and the same would be true if my career path had led me into healthcare management or research and development, for example.

So yes, it can provide a lifelong career, especially when entered into with an open mind and the ability to diversify.



Maria Haynes

Consultant Biomedical Scientist
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

Yes. Now more than ever there are increasing options for career opportunities that are more diverse. A “career” is no longer about choosing your discipline, working through the grades to one day become a manager. Management is not where everyone wants to ultimately end up. We have seen an increase in specialties and additional qualifications at FRCPath level for those who want a career with hands-on practical applications, offering better job satisfaction.

It is no longer just about progressing to management, there has been an increase in specialisms