

A scholar and a gentleman; or, CSI Brisbane

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Assoc Prof Charles Naylor
Former chief forensic pathologist, Queensland Health

Dr Charles Naylor qualified as a doctor from the University of Cambridge in 1976, after which he trained in anatomical pathology at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge for six years. Fulfilling a long-standing ambition to work in Africa, he then lectured and practiced in histopathology at the University of Zimbabwe for two years, following which he returned to England to undertake intensive forensic training.

In 1987, Charles migrated to Queensland "for a year or two" to take on the role of Deputy Director of Forensic Pathology at the Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology in George Street. He was appointed to the role of Chief Forensic Pathologist in 2001 - and retires this year after 34 years of service in Queensland Health.

Dr Naylor has always been a keen advocate of the services libraries provide, particularly the ease with which we source and retrieve information. When new staff start at Forensic and Scientific Services one of the first things he does is bring them to the library and introduce them personally to the staff. Over the years Charles has directed many a forensic pathologist struggling to search for or find supporting literature towards the library. Like many of our regular clients we have grown to anticipate his information needs, and to admire him as a person. He will be missed around campus, but with his retirement I hope that we can engender a love for the library in the next generation of clinical staff on site.

We greatly appreciate all the support we have received from Dr Naylor over the years. On the eve of his full retirement from Queensland Health I asked Charles to put together a few words about the library before he left the organisation:

Memories of Brisbane health libraries on the eve of retirement

It gives me great pleasure to share my experiences of the outstanding services I have received from health libraries over my 34 years practice as a forensic pathologist in Queensland, including the past 20 years as Chief Forensic Pathologist.

Besides engaging with many expert librarians and library technicians, I also have vivid memories the spaces they have occupied – the old Queensland Health building in

Charlotte Street, and the linked floors of Forestry House, as well as the satellite library in the George Street Laboratory, and the library at Forensic and Scientific Services (FSS), Coopers Plains.

One of my earliest literature searches concerned traumatic subarachnoid haemorrhage (TSAH), a typically fatal condition involving arterial bleeding around the base of the brain, usually caused by a blunt impact below the ear. Tragically, this injury came to prominence through the death of Phillip Hughes after he was struck by a cricket ball in 2014. In the 1980s, TSAH was not well known, hence the importance of finding case series in the literature. Thanks to these articles and our growing experience, Professor Tony Ansford and I came to recognise such cases from detectives' telephone calls. *"Doc, he went down with just one hit outside the pub and never woke up – his doctors couldn't work out why."* Those were the days without easy access to CT scans – but in the end Tony and I could guess "why" at once. The dangers of a so-called "coward's punch" are now widely recognised.

In 2014, a mother and her teenage daughter died overseas and underwent coronial investigation after repatriation to Queensland. Although not suspicious, the circumstances of death and the initial pathology findings led to a complex forensic investigation with scombroid fish poisoning and other rare possibilities under consideration, requiring repeated searches of the literature. Librarians at FSS worked with a medical student day after day to review and expand the growing body of articles, which shed valuable light on the investigation as it progressed.

Other notable searches have covered flawed evidence by a paediatrician in the UK (2004); "virtual" autopsies using post-mortem imaging, teenage male suicides, and coping mechanisms in mortuary staff (2005); challenges to forensic pathologists' evidence (2006-08); impacts of declines in suicides and accidents on tissue donation (2009); trends in coronial case-mix (2011); risks to pathologists and mortuary staff from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (2013); standards for maximum case numbers for forensic pathologists (2013-15); post-mortem DNA sampling in human remains, nurses' roles in coronial investigations, and deportation of a Queensland pathologist giving evidence overseas (2016); historic Gattton climate data to gauge likelihood of hypothermia (2018); post-mortem MRI complementing neuropathology (2019); myocarditis in Covid-19, and post-mortem lung needle biopsy (2020); and mortality data, and start dates of new and amended legislation (2021).

At my suggestion, FSS librarians established a Legislation Alert Service, recognising the impact of new legislation on a government laboratory, especially with its role in forensic services and court processes.

This short account would be incomplete without paying tribute to library technicians, who have the skills to hunt down articles in obscure journals and out-of-the-way

libraries. If a speed record for finding an article and sending the PDF to a pathologist existed, then the technician at FSS would surely hold a world record of just a few minutes!

Finally, I would especially like to acknowledge the invaluable daily updates on the explosively growing scientific literature on COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 collated and disseminated by FSS library staff, not only to pathologists, but also of course to the dedicated FSS scientists who have played key roles in the national response to the pandemic.

On a lighter note, it has been rewarding to write a short – but not “lightning” – talk for a belated Science Week 2021 at the invitation of the Library Team Leader on *“Pathology and Piracy: the secret history of Haematoxylin and Brisbane’s mythical tree”*. Who knew that pathology, trees and piracy were linked? Well, I do now, thanks to our wonderful library staff! These are apt topics to conclude my pathology career while training as a botanic gardens guide.

