

Q: What training is involved?

A: The prerequisite to becoming an immunopathologist is a qualification as a medical practitioner (including internship).

Following your internship you need to train as a specialist in pathology, internal medicine or both.

There are three categories of immunologists:

1. those who are primarily responsible for providing laboratory services;
2. those who provide both patient care and laboratory services;
3. those who are primarily responsible for patient care.

The minimum time for specialist training is five years, in a registrar position accredited by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. This means that although you are undergoing further study, you are actually working and earning as a doctor at the same time. Once you have completed all the requirements and examinations and are accepted as a Fellow of the College, you are entitled to use the letters FRCPA after your name.

Training involves time in a diagnostic immunopathology laboratory, clinical care of patients with disorders of the immune system, research in basic or clinical immunology or a combination of these areas.

Medicine is Pathology

For more information
on becoming an Immunopathologist
go to the College website at
www.rcpa.edu.au

This brochure is published by:

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
Durham Hall, 207 Albion Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Tel: 61 2 8356 5858 Fax: 61 2 8356 5828
Email: rcpa@rcpa.edu.au Web: www.rcpa.edu.au

A Career in Immunopathology

 **RCPA**
The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia

Immunopathology

Q: What is Immunopathology?

A: Immunopathology is the medical specialty that deals with the study, diagnosis and management of conditions in which the immune system does not function properly.

Q: What does an Immunopathologist do?

A: Immunopathologists contribute to the diagnosis and care of patients in whom the immune system is either overactive (as in allergic and autoimmune disorders) or underactive (such as primary and secondary immunodeficiencies). They may also be involved in the diagnosis and care of patients with cancers, with organ transplantation and in prevention of disease by immunisation.

In the laboratory, immunopathologists design, perform and supervise a variety of tests of immunefunction that aid in the diagnosis and evaluation of disease.

The types of patients under the care of an immunopathologist can depend on the individual interest of the consultant.

Q: What personal characteristics does an Immunopathologist need?

A: Varying combinations of the following traits:

- scientific curiosity
- interest in keeping up to date with advances in basic science
- the ability to work as part of a team
- good oral and written communication skills
- ability to use on-line databases and familiarity with computers



Q: What are the advantages of being an Immunopathologist?

A: Immunopathology, which has its roots in the smallpox vaccination experiments by Jenner over 200 years ago, is now a discipline involved in sophisticated cellular and molecular activities, which is at the forefront of medical research.

Immunopathology has been a major contributor to the development of new tests and disease management in recent years.

The growth in immunopathology research is vastly increasing our understanding of many diseases, and is instrumental in developing new treatments.

An immunopathologist identifies new needs and might instigate the development of new assays as technology and knowledge of disease mechanisms advance. In this way an immunopathologist is a vital link between the patient and the diagnostic history.

Within the next ten years, the availability of novel therapeutic agents, capable of enhancing, modifying or inhibiting immune reactions, are likely to have a major impact on the treatment of a whole range of illnesses.