

The laboratory team; roles within service delivery and pathologist assistance

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Overview

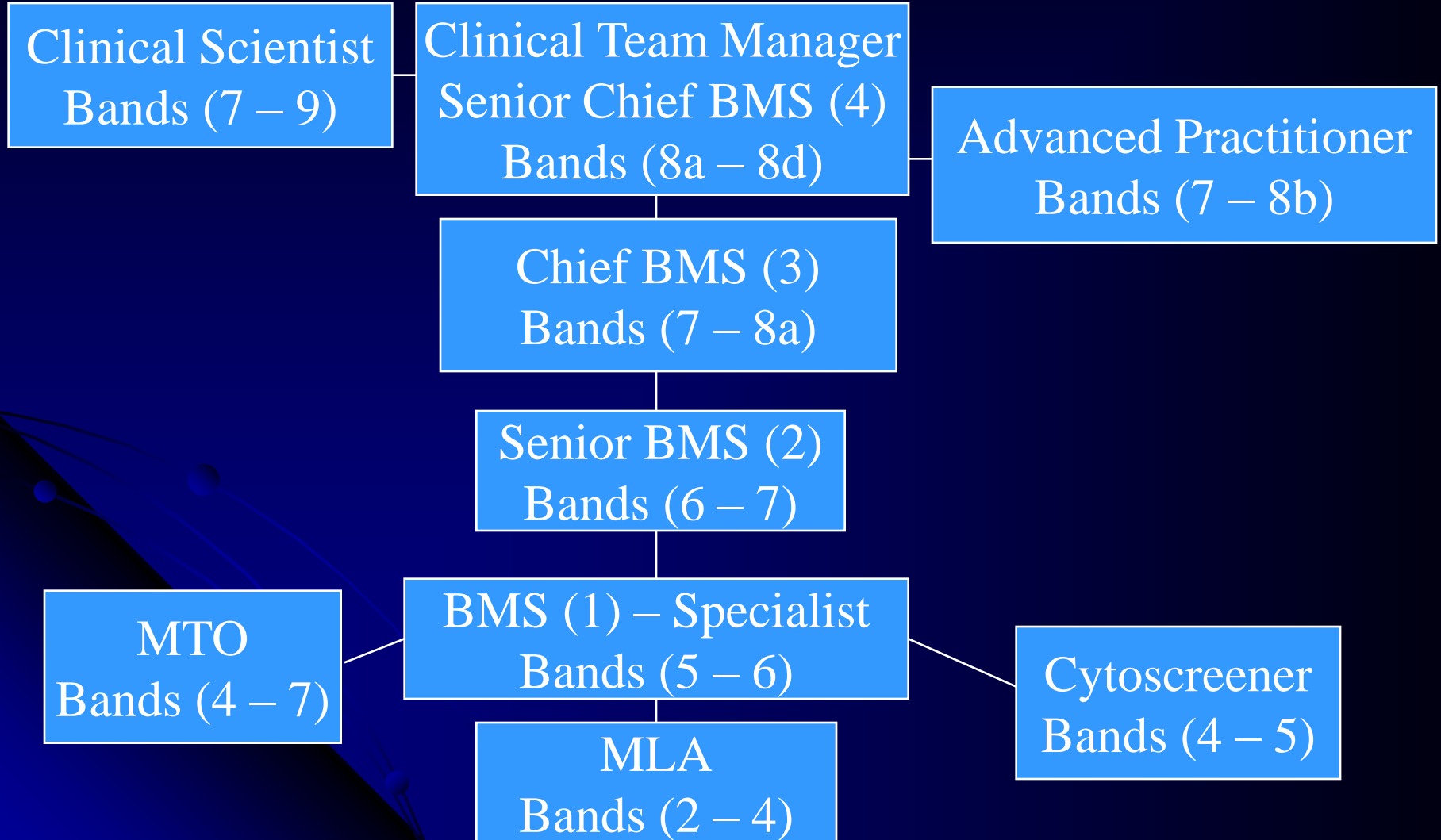
- Laboratory Staff – what's in a name?
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Laboratory Staff – What's in a name?

Finding an identity

- Historically laboratory staff were referred to as Technicians.
- Today the Biomedical Scientist title is in use but will be changed again by 2012.
- Titles were changed to reflect regulatory changes – HPC requires protected titles for its registrants.
- Following the introduction of the Modernising Scientific Careers – some BMS staff will be known as Healthcare Scientists or Healthcare Practitioners. MLA staff will be known as Healthcare Science Assistants.

Laboratory Staff Grades



Qualifications - Academic

- Huge range depending on age of staff within the laboratory.
- Traditionally, the BMS role was akin to an apprenticeship. Day release to college/university accommodated education. Remainder of training on the job.
- Today, BMS staff are recruited as graduates on either an IBMS accredited degree course or will have to “top up” a non-accredited degree.
- There are also IBMS and HPC approved co-terminus degree courses that offer students placements within the laboratory. During this time a portfolio is completed and assessed allowing registration on degree completion.
- During the 90's there was a shift from IBMS associated Fellowship exams/projects to institute approved MSc's.
- Line managing BMS staff or those seeking promotion are encouraged to study management qualifications, these are independent of institute approved courses.

Qualifications – Professional (IBMS)

- Extension of BMS roles within the laboratory – most of these are in accordance with patient waiting time initiatives i.e. reduce consultant workload.
- Structure and assessment administered through IBMS however role delegation was in consultation with the Royal College of Pathologists.
- Areas include – BMS led Tissue Dissection, EM and ICC. Also Advanced Practitioner status for Cervical Cytology and Ophthalmic Pathology.
- BMS' are encouraged to complete the specialist portfolio (post HPC registration) – minimum 2 years, and the Higher Specialist Diploma (post MSc level).
- All qualifications are designed to support the knowledge that the BMS has accumulated over time, to give recognition & complete learning gaps (both theory and fast-track career programme).
- Most of these qualifications require supervision with a named consultant.
- Opportunities depend on department i.e. high number of trainee pathologists may restrict role of tissue dissection BMS.

Registration and Regulation

- MLA staff have varying qualifications, usually non graduate but may have a non-accredited degree.
- Although role extension is available for MLA staff the level of responsibility is capped – not eligible for State registration (regulation).
- All BMS staff require completion of a certificate of competence from the IBMS this demonstrates to the HPC that the individual meets their professional standards.
- CPD for BMS staff is now compulsory as all registrants can be selected for audit and must provide a CPD profile (supported by evidence) on request. The first audit for BMS staff commences 2009.
- CPA accredited departments must also demonstrate staff are competent.

Laboratory Roles

- Depending on role and department size the BMS can be specialist or generalist.
- Through periods of training BMS staff should be exposed to all aspects of laboratory specialisation, with a prolonged period in the “main/routine lab”.
- BMS’ support the pathologist by ensuring that the lab tests performed and resultant slides are of a quality that should provide a diagnosis.
- BMS and MLA staff should also advise and assist pathologists where appropriate e.g. if a case is suitable for processing.
- Where role extension is possible the BMS supports the reporting of cases.

Laboratory Roles – the reality



A



B

Which is your lab?

Laboratory Roles – the reality (cont'd)

- Culture within individual labs determines the amount of interaction/support a pathologist will receive from BMS/MLA staff.
- Management attitudes (both lab and medical) can influence expected roles within the lab e.g. whose job is it to clean cut-up boards.

Improving Assistance

- Communication and personality – get to know those you work with.
- Find out what BMS/MLA staff expect from you – have you had an appropriate induction?
- Make tasks interesting by explaining the purpose of the request .
- Observe interactions amongst BMS staff, the trainee BMS may be more resourceful than the senior BMS.

Conclusion

- A large number of BMS staff are highly academic and experienced.
- Future caveats –assimilation of staff to Modernisation of Scientific Careers.
- Service provision provided by the laboratory determines the potential extension of the BMS role within the lab.
- Advanced BMS roles relieving basic pathologist duties are dependent on management (laboratory and medical).
- Communication between medical and BMS staff is essential to provide optimal services.