

DermPath Update

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PCR

Knoxville Dermatopathology Laboratory moved to 315 Erin Drive on May 31, 2002. Our building has newly renovated 5500 square feet and an additional vacant 2500 square feet used for storage. The new facility has been completely refurbished and includes histology laboratory, pathologist offices, secretarial offices, break room, and library/conference room.

PCR Analysis

Many of you may have noticed a change in the way that we are evaluating atypical lymphocytic proliferations and lymphoid neoplasms. In the past, we were furthering our analysis with a battery of paraffin immunoperoxidase stains and recommending rebiopsy for molecular gene rearrangement studies by Southern Blot Analysis on fresh tissue, we are now using using a different approach.

PCR, Polymerase chain reaction provides several advantages over southern blot analysis. First, fresh tissue is not required. PCR can be performed on formalin fixed, paraffin embedded tissue. Where fixation can crosslink and fragment DNA strands making it unusable by Southern blot extraction and analysis, PCR only requires a fraction of the DNA, and fragmentation does not distort the results as usually only small strands are needed. Second, only small samples are needed which are then magnified by PCR for use in gene rearrangement analysis. Third, rebiopsy is usually unnecessary as sample size and preservation are not at issue. Comparison to previous biopsies, even years old, is easily done. Occasionally, PCR study can be limited by the degree of cellularity of the infiltrate.

The cost of PCR is also comparable to molecular gene rearrangement analysis by Southern Blot.

Dr. Giovanni Tallini, of Yale University, performs these studies for us. This charge is covered by most if not all major insurance plans, and Dr. Tallini's lab bills the patients directly. Medicare only reimburses in

certain circumstances. If you have any questions regarding this test, insurance issues, or technical issues, please call Dr. Googe, Dr. King, or Dr. Page.

(RNP)

WHAT'S NEW AT KDL?

Dr. Mihm to be Visiting Consultant

While Dr. Martin Mihm has been assisting us with difficult dermatopathology cases for fourteen years, we are pleased to announce that Dr. Mihm will now be visiting Knoxville Dermatopathology Laboratory bimonthly to help review cases, teach and participate in research activities. KDL is now also preparing slides for Dr. Mihm and providing him technical assistance with immunohistochemistry and laboratory information computer systems.

Dr. Martin C. Mihm, Jr. is an international consultant for pigmented lesions, lymphoma, and cutaneous inflammatory diseases. He is the co-director of the Pigmented Lesion Clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He is also co-chairman of the Melanoma Pathology Program of the World Health Organization and co-director of the new Rare Tumor Institute founded this year by the World Health Organization.

Dr. Mihm's expertise covers problematic pigmented lesions, problematic lesions of lymphoma, and problems relating to inflammatory diseases of the skin. He has co-authored numerous articles and several books concerning skin pathology.