

Editorial

The Evolving Role of Pathology

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In the new journal “the Annals of Clinical Pathology” we will try to address the many issues that pathologists face in their workplace. Pathologists traditionally are sought for their diagnostic acumen, but few of us could claim we are “Guiding the Surgeon’s Hand” [1] as Juan Rosai. Most pathologists are introverts; comfortable behind our microscopes usually in our basement offices rarely speaking to other clinicians or patients. This concept has changed in recent years as some of us now perform fine needle aspirations and core biopsies and have to meet or even advertise our services. Pathologists are teachers, researchers and are an integral part of the surgical/ oncological team. Yet to date, we are considered mere technicians/ laboratorians, who perform tests upon request by our clinical colleagues.

Traditionally, surgical pathologists are trained to recognize patterns in a two dimensional tissue sections and only cytopathologists are trained to recognize a three dimensional pattern. It is a battle we have to face; to reinvent our skills and recognize patterns in both disciplines. The practice of pathology has evolved. Current trend dictates a move towards minimal invasive measures that include tissue acquisitions for diagnosis. Pathologists have to learn to deal with smaller tissue sample while facing with an ever expanding repertoire of immunohistochemical stains, not only for diagnosis but also to assign prognostic stratifications or assign groups for treatment. Advances in technology means placing a lot of pressure on pathologists who have the added responsibility of adequately triaging the tissue at hand but also to request for tests that are relevant to the particular patient at hand; be it genetic or molecular testing.

As we move forward in this uncertain era of “Affordable Care Act”, we have to move and change accordingly. We hope that this timely new multidisciplinary journal: “The Annals of Clinical Pathology” may address such issues along the way. There are many excellent pathology journals. And this journal does not pretend to replace or duplicate any of those already in existence;

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its purpose merely to supplement them but also to publish new innovative articles in a more expedited fashion. The journal is for the trainees as well as for pathologists in practice, for researchers as well as those seeking new perspective in innovative methods, practical anecdotes and extensive review articles on certain topics that pertains to different aspects of pathology- both clinical and anatomic pathology.

As pathologists in practice, we are aware of the importance of pattern recognition. That “a picture is worth a thousand words”, [2] hence the journal will also feature images in pathology and case reports describing both gross and microscopic features of rare but also unusual presentations of more common diseases to help guide the pathologist towards a better informed diagnosis. Authors are encouraged to submit papers that correlate radiological-pathological correlation; show the advantage of using cytological smears for triaging precious material. Researchers are encouraged to submit papers on translational aspects bringing their research to the clinical arena. Experts will provide extensive review articles and residents will be encouraged to write short case reports and discussions and to submit illustrations which form the basis of their diagnoses. This is an exciting new journal and I am grateful for the opportunity it provides to serve and bring different aspects of pathology together. Nelson Fausto commented that “today neither morphology nor molecular biology alone-or for that matter no single type of approach-can give us the answers needed for the understanding of disease mechanisms.”. It is not difficult to think of a better discipline for a combined approach than in a Department of Pathology.

REFERENCES

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2. Fausto N: What’s in a name? The American Society for Investigative Pathology (Editorial). Am J Pathol 1993; 142:1.

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