

IAP UPDATE

Iowa Association of Pathologists

October, 2014

Pathologists are the Test Experts—Really?

by Daniel Slagel, MD
President, IAP

Pathologists are diagnosticians. We are the primary references for laboratory testing. We claim to be experts at test utilization. We are trained to know which test to order on the right patient for the right reason...or so we think.

Many of us received the anxiety-producing CMS sponsored Comparative Billing Report (CBR) which looked at our 2013 individual, state and national utilization of special stains on upper GI biopsies. While some of the data is not entirely pathology controlled, this report highlighted that the average Iowa pathologist orders significantly fewer special stains than the national average (54 percent vs. 73 percent).

Humbly I admit our group in Dubuque is not an exception to these inconsistencies. We are six pathologists who divide case types

“The average Iowa pathologist orders significantly fewer special stains than the national average.”

and numbers evenly (same denominator). We all order special stains significantly below the national (and Iowa) averages, but there is still a three-fold difference in rate of special stain ordering within our group.

Why the individual and regional differences? I doubt the incidence of upper gastrointestinal disease in Iowa is significantly different from the rest of the nation or that Iowa gastroenterologists perform such great biopsies that all diagnoses can be made without special studies. I also doubt Iowa pathologists perform below (or perhaps above) the standard of care.

We just don't have good data. We don't know the true cost of missing a rare *Helicobacter* that would only be detected by a special stain. Like many areas in medicine, you combine the lack of evidence with a litigious and capitalistic society, and you end up with a huge and expensive mess.

continued on page 3

Join your colleagues at IAP Annual Dinner

You are invited to join your pathology colleagues Thursday, November 13 for an evening of socializing, networking and education at Glen Oaks Country Club in West Des Moines.

The evening will begin with a 6:00 p.m. reception, followed by a dinner and a scientific presentation. This year's speaker is

is William Macon, MD. The title of Dr. Macon's presentation is "Diffuse large B-cell lymphoma: It's not a simple entity anymore." Dr. Macon practices laboratory medicine and pathology and anatomic pathology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He earned his medical degree from Medical University of South Carolina and did his residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. His research emphasis is

continued on page 2

This newsletter is a benefit of your membership in the Iowa Association of Pathologists.

Report from September CAP '14 meeting

by Jamie Weydert, MD, FCAP
Chair, Iowa delegation to CAP House of Delegates

Strategic planning and political advocacy highlighted discussions at a recent meeting of the CAP House of Delegates.

The CAP HOD meeting was September 6, 2014 in Chicago. The HOD was provided updates on the strategic plan to enhance the effectiveness of the HOD in providing the CAP leadership guidance on critical issues. Delegates can serve on many committees and groups that provide critical recommendations and guidance to the CAP as a whole.

HOD leadership stressed the importance of political activism in promoting the interests of pathology. The HOD leadership called for increased donations to PathPAC to support lobbying efforts on behalf of pathologists. HOD leadership also recommended membership in the AMA, noting that although the CAP and AMA may not always agree on all talking points, the AMA remains the most powerful physician lobby in the United States with regard to the 'big picture' issues, such as the SGR.

IAP Annual Dinner *from page 1*

the epidemiology of lymphoma and leukemia.

The cost of the dinner is \$100. Any Iowa pathologist is eligible to attend. Pathology residents are invited to attend free of charge, but are asked to fill out the registration form on the IAP web site, www.iapathologists.org.

IAP elections and a brief member business meeting will be held before the dinner. Any IAP member is eligible to vote in the election of IAP officers and board members.

Daniel Slagel, MD, IAP president submitted the following candidate slate:

President (2-year term) Jared Abbott, MD, Des Moines

Secretary-Treasurer (2-year term) Jamie Weydert, MD, Ames

Board Member-at-large (2-year term) Renee Ellerbroek, MD, Des Moines (incumbent)

Board Member-at-large (2-year term) Clinton Crowder, MD, Des Moines

CAP '15 "The Pathologists' Meeting" October 4-7 • Nashville, Tennessee

New business included a floor discussion of over-utilization of ancillary studies (special stains and immunohistochemistry) in the practice of pathology. Many delegates urged the HOD to help the CAP craft guidelines for appropriate utilization; many delegates expressed frustration regarding over-utilization by pathologists across practice settings.

The HOD membership conducted round table discussions focused on gaining efficiency in anatomic pathology practice. Ideas generated by the HOD will be used by the HOD steering committee to develop possible tools for pathologists to employ in day-to-day practice.*

Electronic registration available for this year's IAP Annual Dinner

Attendees at this year's IAP Annual Dinner will be able to register online through the IAP web site, iapathologists.org. Registrants can pay using Pay Pal or a regular credit card.

Attendees who don't wish to register online will be able to download a registration form from the IAP web site and pay by check through regular mail.

Online membership registration will be launched in 2015, also through the IAP web site.

Vote on Bylaws Revision

IAP members will vote on an addition to the IAP Bylaws at the IAP Annual Dinner Thursday, November 13.

The proposed bylaws revision establishes a Medical Student Membership category. Student membership will be available for any medical student who has expressed a "sincere interest in the field of pathology."*

Test experts

continued from page 1

There has been a loud call for evidence to better define special stain ordering practices. Our societies should be working to establish these standards and not shying away from this contentious issue. We are a much stronger and respected medical profession when we hold ourselves accountable.

“Evidence-based practice will help guide our decisions for accurate and efficient diagnoses in this environment of limited and shrinking resources.”

We are always charged to act in the patient’s best interest. Evidence based medical practice will help guide our decisions for accurate and efficient diagnoses in this environment of limited and shrinking resources. While ordering a special study is easy to do, the decision should never be taken lightly or reflexively unless good science supports such practice. Even when guidelines are available, we know every patient’s situation is different. Sometimes it is the most competent and caring physician who decides NOT to order another test. *

Dr. Slagel practices with Pathology Associates of Dubuque and United Clinical Laboratories. He has served as IAP President since January of 2013.

New staff member, promotion at the UI Department of Pathology

University of Iowa Department of Pathology celebrated several faculty promotions at an August faculty meeting. **Vladimir Badovinac, PhD** has been promoted to Associate Professor of Pathology; **Andrew Bellizzi, MD**, was promoted to Clinical Associate Professor of Pathology, effective July 1, 2014.

The Department recently welcomed a new staff member, Anthony Snow, MD. Dr. Snow received his BS in chemistry from Marquette University in Milwaukee, and his MD from Creighton University in Omaha. He completed his residency in anatomic and clinical pathology at Wake Forest

University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where he served as Chief Resident. Following residency, he came to Iowa to complete the Molecular Genetic Pathology fellowship. *



Marcus Nashelsky, MD
NAME President

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Dr. Nashelsky elected 2015 NAME president

Marcus Nashelsky, MD, was elected President of the National Association of Medical Examiners during the organization's recent annual meeting. The one-year term will begin on January 1, 2015.

Dr. Nashelsky is a Clinical Professor of Pathology and directs the UI Hospitals and Clinics Autopsy Service; his clinical work focuses on forensic and general autopsy pathology. He is also the Johnson County Medical Examiner and an Assistant Iowa State Medical Examiner.

Dr. Nashelsky also serves on the IACME Board of Directors. *