



European Dermatology Forum

Update of the Guideline on Dermatopathology

Developed by the Guideline Subcommittee "Dermatopathology" of the
European Dermatology Forum

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Expiry date: 01/2019

The Management of Dermatopathology

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Update

January, 2014

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Special qualification (expertise) in dermatopathology

Special qualification in dermatopathology, which is necessary to improve the quality of this important field, can only be achieved by years of practice and experience.

Regulations and requirements for accreditation of speciality training programmes in dermatopathology

Identification of accredited training programmes and eligibility assessment for the examination will be accomplished by an International Review Subcommittee for Dermatopathology, which includes equal members from both Pathology and Dermatology UEMS-Sections. This Subcommittee cannot function in a licensing role in the current EU subsidiarity on health care, however, it will be responsible for reviewing the performance (structure, programme design) of the teaching institution. Application for accreditation of a Training Center in Dermatopathology requires as the first step filling out the application forms, which can be requested at <http://www.icdermpath.org>. Programmes wishing to be accredited may have on-site inspection that will include evaluation of the facility, interview with the director of dermatopathology and teaching staff and the trainees.

Training for special qualifications in dermatopathology can also be completed by European physicians in the USA when accepted by Dermatopathology Centers with ACGME (= Accreditation Council for General Medical Education)-approved training programmes.

The following guidelines are used:

- Training must be directed and closely supervised by a pathologist / dermatologist with documented qualifications in dermatopathology (International Committee for Dermatopathology / UEMS-Sections of Dermato-Venereology and Pathology; Royal College of Pathologists; American Board of Dermatopathology). The trainee must be given the opportunity to “sign out” under supervision.
- Training in dermatopathology must be linked with a university clinic, hospital or a comprehensive dermatopathology center.

- The programme must provide organized training in the following areas concerning dermatopathology: routine histology, special stains, immunofluorescence and immunoperoxidase techniques, molecular techniques (at least available in an affiliated institution), electron microscopy (optional), laboratory management, quality assurance.
- A sufficient number and variety of dermatopathology specimens – at least 3000 new accessions per annum – must be available for the trainees to gain experience in diagnostic dermatopathology. In addition study sets and other educational materials should be provided.
- Candidates for speciality training in dermatopathology must have successfully completed their residency training in dermatology, as required by the various national licensing bodies. A continuous and authentic exposure to dermatopathology during the residency time should be confirmed by the trainer
- Discussions, tutorial rounds, lectures, and conferences must be regularly scheduled and held. Especially clinico-pathological conferences, scheduled on a regular base within qualified dermatological clinics, are important in this respect.

Recommendations for length of speciality training

- Satisfactory completion of at least one year of speciality training in dermatopathology in a programme accredited for such training.
- Dermatologists have to spend in addition a minimum period of 6 months in a Pathology Department studying anatomic and surgical pathology, and laboratory techniques.

The one year speciality training in dermatopathology can only be completed after the residency training in dermatology, whereas the 6 months training in anatomic/surgical pathology can be accomplished before, during or after the residency time.

Organisation of a dermatopathology laboratory and requirements

The institution must provide for the practical service and training in dermatopathology the following facilities:

Laboratories

Laboratories (within the training institution) with adequate space and technical equipment for routine histology, special stains, immunofluorescence and immunoperoxidase techniques, molecular techniques (methods and principles of DNA amplification, sequencing and hybridization), (electron microscopy, optional), laboratory management, quality assurance.

Personnel

A programme director, who is responsible for the direction and general administration of the laboratory, must be available. He must show documented qualifications in dermatopathology (experience training; Diploma in Dermatopathology) and is especially responsible for the training programme. There must be a sufficient number of qualified physicians (pathologists, dermatologists) with documented experience and qualifications in dermatopathology. A ratio of one full-time faculty member to 3 trainees is recommended. Other staff: There must be a sufficient number of qualified technicians and clerical staff to support practical laboratory work and to meet the service responsibilities.

Dermatopathology specimens

The number of routine dermatopathology specimens from within the institution and from outside (including referrals) must be at least 3000 per annum. This material must be available for examination to residents and to trainees seeking special qualification in dermatopathology. In addition slide sets should be provided.

Microscopes including a multi-headed microscope

Projection microscopes linked to a television video monitor. In difficult lesions and in unclear features of a disease it should be standard of care to submit skin biopsies together with clinical photographs.

Office facilities

Computers, computer medical databases and a multi-user network system for input of data and generation of dermatopathology reports, conference room to support teaching and educational responsibilities, research space for scientific projects in dermatopathology, library with journals, textbooks and other teaching aids related to dermatopathology and pathology.

Examination – Diploma in Dermatopathology

After having completed the full requirements in an institutional *training programme, which has been accredited*, physicians would be qualified to appear before the International Committee for Dermatopathology / UEMS-Sections of Dermato-Venereology and Pathology to take the examination for special qualification in dermatopathology (**see <http://www.icdermpath.org>**).

Certification will be based on the examination, which consists of a multiple-choice test including free answers and a practical part comprising histopathologic sections.

Candidates who have been successful in the examination will be awarded the International Board Certification in Dermatopathology – Diploma in Dermatopathology.

Definitions

Special qualification in Dermatopathology

All pathologists and dermatologists have training in dermatopathology during their residency. To achieve, however, *special qualification in dermatopathology* we must

accept the fact that dermatopathology cannot be practised as an avocation and therefore additional extensive training leading to a Diploma in Dermatopathology must be obtained.

A pathologist or a dermatologist with special qualification in dermatopathology (“practising” dermatopathologist) is a pathologist or dermatologist with special training and/or certification in dermatopathology, who devotes a substantial portion of his professional effort to the reading of cutaneous pathology. Candidates must fulfil specific minimum requirements of training in an accredited center and must have taken the examination for the Diploma in Dermatopathology held under the auspices of the International Committee for Dermatopathology (ICDP) and the Union Europeenne des Medecins Specialistes (UEMS), sections of Dermatology and Pathology.

While there is no legal reason why a pathologist would need this special qualification for the ability to read dermatological sections, some might welcome the opportunity to be officially certified as dermatopathologists. For a dermatologist, passing the examination would represent recognition of competency in dermatopathology.

Other definitions

It is also important to recognise the distinction between several terms commonly used regarding speciality status. *Accreditation* has to do with approval of training programmes. *Examination* is a process whereby competence is ascertained. *Certification* is attested by a certificate issued by an official body. Certification may be regarding expertise, training, or competence. *Licensure* is a function of states, nations, and/or governing bodies regulating practice in geographic areas.

At present there is a need for the definition of accreditation of training programmes, of certification based on the examination, and of maintaining the competence in dermatopathology (continuing medical education and continuing professional development) in most countries of Europe and many other states in the world outside of the USA. Currently dermatopathology in Europe is regarded as accepted subspeciality only in Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Austria.

Conflicts of interests

Guideline for the Management of Dermatopathology					
		Helmut Kerl	Günther Burg	Rino Cerio	Lorenzo Cerroni
1	Grant	non	None	None	None
2	Consulting fee or honorarium	non	None	None	None
3	Support for travel to meetings for the study or other purposes	non	None	None	None
4	Fees for participation in review activities, such as data monitoring boards, statistical analysis, end point committees, and the like	non	None	None	None
5	Payment for writing or reviewing the manuscript	non	None	None	None
6	Provision of writing assistance, medicines, equipment, or administrative support	non	None	None	None
7	Other	non	none	non	non

* This means money that your institution received for your efforts on this study.

Relevant financial activities outside the submitted work					
1	Board membership	non	non	non	non
2	Consultancy	non	non	non	non
3	Employment	non	non	non	non
4	Expert testimony	non	non	non	non
5	Grants/grants pending	non	non	non	non
6	Payment for lectures including service on speakers bureaus	non	non	non	non
7	Payment for manuscript preparation	non	non	non	non
8	Patents (planned, pending or issued)	non	non	non	non
9	Royalties	non	non	non	non
10	Payment for development of educational presentations	non	non	non	non
11	Stock/stock options	non	non	non	non
12	Travel/accommodations/meeting expenses unrelated to activities listed**	non	non	non	non

13	Other (err on the side of full disclosure)	non	non	non	non
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* This means money that your institution received for your efforts.

** For example, if you report a consultancy above there is no need to report travel related to that consultancy on this line.

Other relationships					
1	Are there other relationships or activities that readers could perceive to have influenced, or that give the appearance of potentially influencing, what you wrote in the submitted work?	non	non	non	non

Conflicts of interests

Guideline for the Management of Dermatopathology					
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1	Grant	non	None	None	None
2	Consulting fee or honorarium	non	None	None	None
3	Support for travel to meetings for the study or other purposes	non	None	None	None
4	Fees for participation in review activities, such as data monitoring boards, statistical analysis, end point committees, and the like	non	None	None	None
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Conflicts of interests

The Management of Dermatopathology					
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1	Grant	None			
2	Consulting fee or honorarium	None			
3	Support for travel to meetings for the study or other purposes	None			
4	Fees for participation in review activities, such as data monitoring boards, statistical analysis, end point committees, and the like	None			
5	Payment for writing or reviewing the manuscript	None			
6	Provision of writing assistance, medicines, equipment, or administrative support	None			
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