



Liver Pathology

Since 2007, liver pathology activities in the UK have been developed and coordinated by a subcommittee of the BSG Pathology Section. A group met on 29.09.14 to develop a proposal for a "UK Liver Pathology Group" to improve the visibility of our activities and facilitate communication of developments and good practice among all pathologists who report liver specimens in the UK. These discussions are ongoing.

1. Interpretive EQA

The National Liver Pathology EQA scheme started in 1994 and now has around 100 members. There are two circulations of 12 cases per year, as glass slides, also available with special stains on line. The scheme is now facilitated by EQAlite, since PHE ceased to support it in April 2015. Discussion of both circulations is part of the annual update in liver pathology meeting, and is central to encouraging uniform reporting of biopsies in the UK. Further details concerning the EQA scheme together with other liver pathology CPD matters are available on line at: http://www.virtualpathology.leeds.ac.uk/eqa/liver_pages.php

2. CPD:

There is an established cycle of annual liver pathology CPD meetings which comprises:

- "Liver Biopsy in the Assessment of Medical Liver Disease" - held annually at RCPATH since 2009. Next meeting scheduled for 29th February 2016.
- Annual BSG "Update in Liver Pathology". The 11th annual meeting will take place in Harrogate on 10th December 2015. As usual, the programme for the meeting will include recent advances in liver pathology and discussion of this year's two Liver Histopathology EQA circulations.
- Liver Transplant Histopathology Meeting for pathologists in the 8 UK and Ireland transplant centres. This annual meeting since 2008 but unfortunately did not occur in 2015. We plan to resume meeting in 2016.

3. Postgraduate Training: shape of training in small subspecialties

Are we a small subspecialty? Liver postgraduate training varies greatly among training programmes. The following postgraduate activities currently exist:

- A practical slide-based histopathology workshop in Liver Pathology. This was first held on Friday 28th March 2014 in Leeds, and repeated in September 2015. The course was designed for senior trainees and consultants and complements the annual RCPATH course on "Liver Biopsy in the Assessment of Medical Liver Disease". Most trainees on the course said they did not have a liver-specific attachment in their training programme. We now plan to run the course as an annual event.
- We continue to provide suitable cases with special stains for the final FRCPath exam.
- We have postgraduate training materials on our website and intend to develop these further



Two possibilities for providing sub-speciality training attachments in liver pathology for trainees have been discussed at meetings of the BSG Pathology Section Liver Subcommittee.

- Basic training in liver pathology for trainees on rotations without a specialist liver centre.
- More advanced training in liver pathology for post-exam trainees, who are considering applying for consultant posts, which include a substantial component of liver pathology.

A number of both of the above attachments have taken place on an ad hoc basis. No formal arrangements are currently in place. These would benefit from a more formal arrangement.

4. Workforce Planning

Liver pathology outside specialist centres is provided by GI pathologists (larger departments) or by non-specialist pathologists. Some departments receive very few medical liver biopsies and the 2014 “tissue pathways for liver biopsies” document includes recommendations on service delivery for such departments. Hepatology networks and referral pathways for specialist opinion are beginning to develop, with regional variation. There is beginning to be a move towards more centralisation, but this is slow.

5. Training and Implementation of Molecular Pathology

Molecular pathology techniques currently have a limited role in routine clinical practice in liver pathology. Liver cancer is increasing and molecular pathology is likely to be important in the future. Primary liver cancer is not a cancer site included in the 100,000 genome project. A number of research studies are investigating the role of molecular techniques as diagnostic, prognostic and therapeutic markers in primary hepatic neoplasms, including hepatocellular adenoma, hepatocellular carcinoma and cholangiocarcinoma. These include a National Collaborative HCC UK initiative, which has pathology representation.

6. Datasets and ICCR

The following documents have been published via the RCPATH:

- Tissue Pathways for liver biopsies – 2nd edition published March 2014. Further discussions are taking place with colleagues in hepatology and radiology regarding guidelines for obtaining liver biopsies of adequate size for reporting on medical liver diseases.
- Dataset for liver cancer – 2nd edition published June 2012. Planning of 3rd version is being deferred, pending publication of the ICCR Liver Cancer Dataset (see below)
- Two audit templates for liver biopsy have been tested and were submitted to the College in October 2015.
 - “An audit of the reporting of medical liver biopsies” (tested in Plymouth)
 - “A clinico-pathological audit of the effect of medical liver biopsies on patient management” (tested in Oxford and findings published as a short report in J Clin Pathol)

Work is underway (since July 2014) to produce an ICCR Liver Cancer Dataset. This document will include recommendations for reporting cases of intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma, perihilar cholangiocarcinoma and hepatocellular carcinoma. The chair of the group is Prof AD Burt. Dr JI Wyatt and Prof SG Hübscher are both members of the expert panel.

SGH/JIW 02.11.15 on behalf of Liver Subcommittee, Pathology Section, BSG.