

## 2013 Annual Report: Liver Pathology

Since 2007, liver pathology in the UK have been developed and coordinated by a subcommittee of the BSG Pathology Section. The EQA scheme has increased to 100 members, and 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](http://www.virtualpathology.leeds.ac.uk/eqa/liver_pages.php)

We propose to create a new "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. This currently covers a wide spectrum, from specialists reporting exclusively tertiary referrals, transplant, resection and paediatric specimens to general pathologists reporting fewer than 20 biopsies per year (see recommendations in 'Tissue Pathways' below). The remit of the group will cover the activities listed in the headings below.

### **Training and education (UG PG CPD)**

#### **CPD:**

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

- Liver biopsies in the diagnosis of Medical Liver Disease - held annually at RCPATH since 2010, most recently Sept 23rd 2013,
- Annual BSG update in liver pathology. This includes discussion of the year's two Liver histopathology EQA circulations. 2012 meeting in Leeds, 68 delegates; 2013 meeting in London on 28th November to precede the BDIAP meeting on GI Pathology, fully booked 100 delegates.
- Liver Transplant histopathology meeting - on the first day of the annual UK and Ireland Liver Transplant meeting - for pathologists in the 8 UK and Ireland transplant centres (Next: Jan 2014, Cambridge).

#### **Postgraduate:**

In autumn 2012 there was no liver case in the final FRCPath exam - in part a consequence of central provision of long cases with special stains. We have liaised with the lead examiner to ensure that suitable cases are provided for future exams.

Trainees working in training programmes which do not include a major liver centre - we are developing and coordinating opportunities for stage D attachments in other training programmes.

#### **Undergraduate:**

We plan to collect data on the liver pathology included in undergraduate curriculums in different medical schools, with a view to providing on-line training materials.

### **Research and clinical trials issues**

BASL/CLRN UK HCC Clinical Trial Group. National initiative to carry out collaborative research and clinical trials involving patients within UK. First meeting held in Cambridge, September 2013. This includes a proposal for the prospective collection of blood, urine and tissue samples (submitted to CRUK, October 2013)

National STOPAH trial - treatment of cirrhosis, what is the contribution of liver biopsy?  
National ABC-03 and 04 cholangiocarcinoma studies - pathology reviewed centrally.

### **New developments and issues affecting service delivery**

Histopathology 24 hour on call service for donor lesion frozen sections: this is for incidental lesions in any organ discovered during transplant organ harvesting. Currently provided by liver transplant centres, long term solution using digital images is being investigated. There is currently a 3 month prospective audit to explore the scope of the service required.

New antivirals for hepatitis B and C: these will transform the treatment of viral hepatitis in the next few years. Tissue elastography (fibrosan) is being introduced as a screen for no or late fibrosis, to avoid some biopsies for stage; in other countries this has resulted in a reduced number of medical liver biopsies. Increased awareness of liver disease may counteract this effect, and the future requirement for liver biopsy pathology cannot be predicted.

The BSG Liver Section plans a repeat national liver biopsy audit (previously in 1991), which will include a section on the biopsy pathology and contribution of the biopsy to the patients' diagnosis/management. The purpose is to improve clinical hepatology services, as has been achieved for endoscopy services through national audits. We envisage that the data items in this will overlap with the RCPATH audit templates being developed.

### **Service configuration and profile (local, vs regional vs national)**

Tissue pathways, 2nd edition - recommends

*For pathologists working outside hepatology centres, there should be an identified **local lead histopathologist responsible for liver biopsies**, ensuring quality of laboratory work, opportunity for clinicopathological discussion (as part of a formal MDT meeting, or informally), and communication with the hepatology centre pathology department. This responsibility should be **formally identified in the pathologist's job plan**.*

*When the liver workload is low (<40 medical liver biopsies/year), no more than two pathologists should report the biopsies, and when it is very low, passing the liver workload to a larger unit should be considered, as maintaining an acceptable level of expertise may be difficult if only small numbers of biopsies are reported.*

*For pathologists working within hepatology centres: Liver biopsies are reported by consultants with a specialist interest in liver pathology. There should be at least two consultants to ensure specialist cover, and they should participate in a specialist liver EQA scheme.*

### **Overview of College Documents 'owned' or contributed to by the specialty**

- Tissue Pathways for liver biopsies - second edition currently in consultation process
- Dataset for liver - The section on liver tumour biopsies will be updated to match the section in Liver Tissue Pathways.
- Audit templates: Medical liver biopsy audit and medical liver biopsy - clinicopathological audit.

### **Workforce planning and recruitment to the specialty**

Liver pathology outside specialist centres is provided by GI pathologists (larger departments) or by non-specialist pathologists. Hepatology networks and referral pathways for specialist opinion are developing. We aim to ensure there is support and CPD for pathologists working in different types of department.

### **Suggestions for educational events that might be hosted by the College**

The annual medical liver biopsy meeting already uses the College facilities.

*JIW 01.11.13 on behalf of liver subcommittee, Pathology Section, BSG.*