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| **Policy For Non-Pathologists Performing Gross Examination of Surgical Specimens** | | | | |
| **Purpose:** | * Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota employs and trains Histotechnicians (HT) and Pathologist Assistants (PA) to assist the pathologists with gross examination of surgical specimens. The goal of this policy is to maximize the timeliness, accuracy and productivity of the department. * As stated in the [HI 1.05 Guidelines for Grossing](file://Dax/data/Dept/LAB/Quality/Lab%20QM%20Drafts/Procedure%20Drafts/Histology/HI%201.05%20Guidelines%20for%20Grossing.doc), all HTs and PAs who participate in gross examination of pathology specimens meet the educational requirements of both the College of American Pathologists and the Joint Commission of Hospital Accreditation. Annual competency is performed; in addition, the pathologist assesses every case with microscopic examination for accuracy and completeness of the gross description. | | | |
| **Policy:** | **Supervision and Pathologist Responsibility**  All specimen requests with a “gross only” designation (see the SOP HI 1.07 Policy for Specimen Submission for Gross and Microscopic Examination to the Pathology Department) require that a pathologist must review these specimens before they are signed out.  Gross examination performance by individual HTs or PAs are reviewed in two ways, as defined below: **Direct** Supervision and **Indirect** Supervision.   * *Direct supervision* is defined as the review of the tissue by a pathologist before the gross examination is complete (See also SOP HI 1.05). * *Indirect supervision* does NOT require the pathologist to view or discuss the tissue before the gross examination is completed (See also SOP HI 1.05). | | | |
| **Policy:** | **For Pathologist Assistants:**  **DIRECT SUPERVISION** by a pathologist is required of any of the following tissue types:   * Fresh specimens * Frozen specimens/Intraoperative consultation specimens * Neoplasms; Biopsies or resections for malignancy   Pathologist Assistants are certified by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP) and are either graduates of an accredited training program or qualify by direct experience. They are trained to handle the full spectrum of surgical specimens and are therefore expected to process, under the supervision of a pathologist, all types of gross specimens received in the laboratory. The pathologist assistant is expected to exercise good judgement and ask for direct supervision by the pathologist working with surgicals that week, as necessary, especially with complex specimens to include resections for suspected malignancies, resections for margins other than uncomplicated skin specimens and cases with features outside the usual practice of the PA at Children’s. All gross dictations are reviewed by the staff pathologist responsible for the case sign out. | | | |
|  | **For Histotechs:**  **INDIRECT SUPERVISION** (as defined in Grossing Guidelines for Non-Pathologists, SOP HI1.07) by a pathologist/ pathologist assistant. The histotechs follow Gross dissection protocol for the following specimens using Standard templates for the speech recognition software and dictation backup implemented in anatomic pathology.  Standard Template formats:   * Single Tonsil * Adenoids Only * Tonsil Only * Tonsils and Adenoids * GI Biopsies * Incidental Appendix * Inguinal Hernia Sacs * Sinus content * Thymus     Standard templates were created for standardization of gross to be implemented by non- pathologist staff. They exist within the speech recognition software with a copy of the template format on the F:drive, Speech Recognition Gross Templates.  Histotechs are 2 year graduates from an HT program with specialized training in the grossing of specimens who function under the supervision of a pathologist or pathologist assistant. | | | |
| **Policy:** | The HT or PA should consult a pathologist when handling tissue outside of these parameters, or in the event that help is needed. Throughout the gross and microscopic evaluation of each specimen, the pathologist retains sole responsibility for the entire content of the report. A pathologist performs all microscopic examinations of tissue and a pathologist makes all tissue diagnoses.  A pathologist’s involvement is required for tumor specimens and critical (stat) specimens/biopsies to insure appropriate handling and sampling of the specimen. The intent of the examination is to document gross pathology, specimen margins where necessary and to choose and process appropriate tissue for various diagnostic modalities. Specimens received after hours not covered in the list above must be examined by the pathologist on call prior to grossing/sampling of the tissue. That examination can be deferred to the following day if processing the tissue overnight risks compromising the integrity of the specimen. Also, the use of digital images by the pathologist to direct the sampling of the specimen from locations away from the grossing area is permitted. If that is done the image used must be archived in the Department of Pathology Image Database. | | | |
| **Documentation:** | A pathologist reviews all gross dictation before a case is signed out. The AP department Medical Director evaluates performance of HTs and PAs who perform gross tissue examinations on an annual basis. | | | |
| **Specimen**  **Retention:** | All tissue grossed by histology and pathology personnel will be retained until at least 2 weeks after the case is signed out. Retention of all specimen types will follow existing departmental policies (see Storage and Disposal of Specimens SOP 2.02 | | | |
| Training Plan/Competency Assessment | Initial training of all personnel for grossing will be the responsibility of the Pathology Assistant or designated pathologist(s). Ongoing training for new specimen types will be at the discretion of the pathologist assigned to surgicals. The HT or PA will use any or all of the following resources available to them when performing gross examinations of surgical specimens.  For trouble shooting purposes, the recommended order in which these resources are consulted is as follows:   * Use written resources such as Ackerman’s Surgical Pathology, kept in the gross room, or Surgical Pathology: an Illustrated Guide, 1996 by Hruban, Phelps, Westra and Isacson. * Ask the help of the Pathology Assistant. * Ask the help of the pathologist assigned to surgicals, or another available pathologist. | | | |
| **Authorization** |  | | **Signature** | **Date** |
| **Medical Director** | | Dennis Drehner, DO | 3/15/09 |
| **Pathology Assistant** | | Melissa Turner, PA | 3/15/09 |
|  | **Medical Director** | | Peter Helseth, MD | 5/1/12 |
|  | **Medical Director** | | Megan K. Dishop MD | 6/21/15 |
|  |  | | Megan K. Dishop, MD | 6/21/17 |
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| **Annual Review** | **Designee** |  | |  |
| **Pathology Assistant** | Melissa Turner, PA | | 5/5/10 |
|  | Melissa Turner, PA | | 2/24/11 |
|  | Melissa Turner, PA | | 5/21/12 |
|  |  | Melissa Turner,PA | | 6/26/15 |
|  | **Histology Supervisor** | Prabha Chintapalli | | 6/19/17 |
|  | Revision | Melissa Turner PA | | 1/7/19 |
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