Welcome back to the ASC Cytopathology Program Directors Communicator. In this issue, we feature the Spring Cell Talks winners and give you updates on Cell Talks and the Strategies in Cytopathology Education (SCE) session provided by the Cytopathology Program Directors Committee (CPDC) at the ASC 64th Annual Scientific Meeting this coming November.

Dr. Scott Anderson provides an update on the Cytopathology Fellowship Programs web page. Dr. Anne Mills graciously shared her tips on how to survive a fellowship program and how to work with people in Reflections on Cytopathology Fellowship, which are helpful in the fellow training period as well as for a smooth integration into a working environment.

Rulong Shen, MD

Editorial Comment

Strategies in Cytopathology Education (SCE) at the ASC Annual Meeting in New Orleans

Attention Program Directors, CCC Members, and Cytology Faculty:
Attend the Strategies in Cytopathology Education Session at the ASC Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans. Registration is free in 2016!!! Sign up today!

Strategies in Cytopathology Education
Friday, November 4, 2016, 1:00 pm-5:30 pm

1:00–3:00 pm: Giving Your Fellows Wings
Steven Long, MD, Stanford University

For Cytopathology Fellows, securing and transitioning to a job are two of the most stressful experiences in their careers. Ever wonder how you can more effectively help your fellows land and thrive in their first job? Whether your fellow is looking for an academic or community practice setting, this session will offer practical tips on how to best prepare your fellows for entering the job market and how you as a Program Director can facilitate their job search.

3:30 pm-5:30 pm: Innovative Approaches to Teaching Systems-Based Practice Milestones
Paul Staats, MD, University of Maryland
Roseann Wu, MD, MPH, University of Pennsylvania
Edmund Cibas, MD, Brigham and Women’s Hospital
Michael Henry, MD, Mayo Clinic
Most cytopathology fellowship programs face the need to revise parts of their curriculum to accommodate the ACGME Milestones. Program Directors have expressed particular difficulty with Systems-Based Practice (SBP) Milestones covering personnel, finance, quality improvement, risk management, and safety. These areas can be especially challenging to teach and learn in an effective and engaging manner.

This session surveys a variety of creative approaches to teaching these Milestones to fellows. Dr. Staats will present the results of ASC Program Directors’ Committee surveys on systems-based practice. Dr. Wu will discuss leveraging resources and technologies in Systems-Based Practice (SBP) education. Dr. Cibas will review the fellow portfolio as a tool for evaluating systems-based practice milestone achievement. Dr. Henry will discuss the Mayo Clinic’s Virtual Medical Director Program as a means to teach systems-based practice.

We are very excited to present this informative, fun, and now free session, and we hope you will join us. See you in New Orleans!

Contributors: Roseann Wu, MD, MPH, Christina Kong, MD, Jennifer Sauter, MD, and Paul Staats, MD

The Cytopathology Fellowship Programs Web site

The Cytopathology Fellowship Programs portion of the ASC Web site http://www.cytopathology.org/cytopathology-fellowship-programs/ contains a wealth of useful information to Cytopathology Fellowship Program Directors and Cytopathology fellows. Here, you can find recent issues of the program directors Communicator and numerous links to resources available from both the ACGME and ASC. The resources include handout and materials from past Strategies in Cytopathology Education sessions, links to Cell Talks, Progressive Evaluation of Competency, Lab Management Educational resources, Career Session handout, and much more!

The site also contains a link to members of the Cytopathology Program Directors Committee of the ASC. Each member is dedicated to the success of fellowship programs and are more than willing to be an additional resource. Feel free to reach out or to interact with us at the next ASC meeting!

Contributor: Scott Anderson, MD
**Update on Cell Talks**

**Have you heard about Cell Talks?**
This ASC-exclusive program was initiated by the CPDC to meet the needs of residents and cytopathology fellows in achieving and documenting progress through the ACGME Cytopathology Milestones. We hope that Program Directors and faculty will help spread the word about Cell Talks!

**What exactly are Cell Talks?**
Cell Talks are “bite-sized,” online didactic modules that cover a variety of topics relating to cytopathology laboratory management, professionalism, communication, and more. As these topics can be difficult to teach and learn at the microscope, the CPDC developed several Cell Talks to introduce important concepts in these areas. They can be used to complement or supplement an existing cytopathology curriculum.

**How can I get involved?**
Tell your residents and fellows about the program. The Cell Talks program is open to any resident or fellow with a faculty mentor. Information about the submission process, including suggested topics and a template, is available at www.cytopathology.org/cell-talks. The CPDC will provide submitters with feedback on their presentations, and selected winners will receive production support for recording their Cell Talk as well as a $125 monetary award.

**Meet our Spring 2016 Winners:**

- **January 24, 2017**
  Cytology of Body Fluids: A Kaleidoscope of Challenging Cases  
  Manon Auger, MD, FRCP  
  Yonca Kanber, MD

- **February 28, 2017**
  Role of Fine Needle Aspiration in the Diagnosis of Hematopoietic Lesions  
  Ran S. Hoda, MD, FiAC  
  Scott Ely, MD

- **March 28, 2017**
  The New Diagnostic-Paradigms in Follicular Patterned Lesions of the Thyroid FNA Specimens  
  Zubair W. Baloch, MD, PhD

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**Dr. Vaidehi Avadhani**, Emory University  
*Cultural Competency in Cytopathology Practice*

**Dr. Maryam Tahmasbi**, Moffitt Cancer Center  
*Intraoperative Cytologic Evaluation of Sentinel Lymph Node (SLN) of Breast Cancer Patients: The Role of Cytopathologists from Technical Management to Health Care Team*

**Dr. Saeed Asiry**, Lenox Hill Hospital  
*Wise as a Cell!*
When is the deadline?
The next round of Cell Talk submissions is due December 5, 2016, so don’t delay, and have your trainees submit today!

LEARN MORE HERE!
www.cytopathology.org/celltalks

Reflections on Cytopathology Fellowship

A cytology fellowship represents a fantastic “finishing year” for the pathology trainee: an intense amalgamation of time at the microscope, collaboration with clinicians, and hands-on patient care. My cytology fellowship shaped me as a pathologist and helped me realize my identity as a real doctor, a feeling that can sometimes elude pathology residents sequestered in the gross room and at the microscope. Looking back on my cytology fellowship, I have three pieces of advice for incoming fellows as they embark on this exciting and sometimes intimidating year.

First, foster a strong working relationship with your cytotechnologists, and learn from them eagerly. Begin your fellowship by inviting their suggestions and feedback, and make sure to keep that door wide open as the year goes by. Ask them to bring back Paps and fluids that they disagree with you on, and have them show you the cells that worry—or reassure—the most. As a new attending, I continue to learn from our cytotechnologists’ technical expertise, diagnostic acumen, and understanding of quality processes. Embrace that their skill set is at once different from and complementary to your own, and that both roles are critical to patient care. Don’t forget to show your appreciation with words and deeds, for just as pathologists sometimes feel slighted by the lack of public recognition we receive for our contributions to patient care, so too cytotechnologists’ tireless efforts are largely invisible to the outside world.

Second, develop a reservoir of trust and goodwill with your clinical colleagues. Perhaps the most fun aspect of cytopathology training is developing face-to-face rapport with clinicians who you once knew only as a name in the medical record or a voice on the phone. This collaborative environment is truly among the most rewarding parts of medicine and will build relationships that improve all of your diagnostic activities. However, these relationships aren’t automatic. Among the biggest challenges you will face as a fellow will be gaining your clinical colleagues’ trust as you begin to practice rapid on-site evaluations (ROSE). Come July, the radiologists, gastroenterologists, and pulmonologists you serve will be accustomed to having a seasoned fellow around and may be easily frustrated by the extra time and uncertainty that invariably accompanies working with new trainees. If you find yourself pressured to call malignancy or adequacy on a sample that doesn’t meet criteria, take a deep breath and hold your ground. Most of my mistakes during the first months of fellowship stemmed from trying to wring a diagnosis out of too little material. As one of our senior pathologists, Dr. Henry Frierson, often reminded us, “Make the cells come to you. You can’t call what isn’t there.”

While it may frustrate them initially, your colleagues will soon become grateful for your steadiness. Another needle pass may be a momentary inconvenience, but it is far better than bringing the patient back for another procedure because diagnostic material wasn’t initially obtained.
Finally, listen to and enjoy your patients. A cytology fellowship involves far more time at the bedside than a traditional AP/CP residency program, and some trainees may find themselves initially daunted by the degree of patient contact they have in fellowship when performing palpable FNAs. This can be exacerbated by the gravity of these encounters: cytopathologists are often called on to perform an uncomfortable and perhaps even unwelcome procedure during a patient’s darkest hour. Despite this context, these interactions can be incredibly positive. Time and time again, I have seen how grateful patients are for the warmth and empathy their pathologist shows them during a palpable FNA, and have many times heard, “you’re one of the kindest doctors I’ve met.” Do I think this is because we pathologists are nicer people than oncologists and surgeons? Probably not: while cytopathologists are indeed a genuinely lovely bunch, I can’t claim that we’re intrinsically better people than our clinician colleagues. Rather, we are able to bring a unique energy to the bedside because these interactions still hold novelty for us. Because we don’t run clinic or round on inpatients day in and day out, we can maintain a reserve of emotional energy and a fresh perspective when we walk through a patient’s door.

Draw from that reserve to take those extra moments to sit down with your patients and set them at ease. Learn a bit about them, and never underestimate the comfort of an appropriately laid hand. When I anticipate that the news from my microscope is likely to be grim, I often tell patients, “I understand this procedure can be scary: nobody likes to see me coming because I always bring a needle and I sometimes bring bad news. But I try not to think of it that way; instead, I like to think I bring answers. And knowledge is power: once we know what’s going on, we can help your team take the best possible care of you.”

As you move through your “finishing year,” you’ll develop your own style in the quest for and delivery of cytopathology answers. You will find right the balance of humility and confidence, and you will have FUN. We at the ASC are here to support you every step of the way, and we can’t wait to meet the cytopathologists you’ll become.

Contributor: Anne M. Mills, MD

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