(Re)certification in pathology— is it a reality or an illusion?

The Hungarian situation

Janina Kulka

2nd Department of Pathology, Semmelweis University Budapest
Outline

• Certification in Pathology
  • Overview of the system
  • Elements required during training
  • Certification Exam (CE)

• Certification in Cytopathology and in Molecular pathology

• What happens after the certification exam until a certified pathologist retires?
  • CME system (credits)
  • Courses organized by scientific societies, university departments, suppliers, etc.
  • Voluntary participation in EQA
Certification

1. Formation time: 60 months
2. Formation program:

**24 months BASICS**
- 1 month basic courses
- 1 month internal medicine
- 1 month radiology
- 21 months pathology, histopathology

**36 months SPECIAL practice**
- 4 weeks gynecopathology
- 3 weeks diagnostic cytopathology
- 2 weeks renal pathology
- 2 weeks liver pathology
- 2 weeks hematopathology
- 2 weeks orthopedic pathology
- 2 weeks uropathology
- 2 weeks lung pathology
- 2 weeks ENT pathology
- 2 weeks neuropathology
- 2 weeks dermatopathology
- 3 months hospital practice
- 8 weeks certification exam preparatory course

3. Other prerequisites of certification exam

Given number of autopsies, histopathology and cytopathology specimens, special techniques.

22/2012. (IX. 14.) EMMI (Ministry of Human Resources) order
**Required Number of cases:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First two years:</th>
<th>Last three years:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>180 autopsies (incl. perinatal cases)</td>
<td>300 autopsies (incl. perinatal cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 + 400 + 400 biopsies</td>
<td>8000 histopathology reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 frozen sections</td>
<td>200 frozen sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 aspiration cytopathology cases</td>
<td>1000 aspiration cytopathology cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 gynecological smears</td>
<td>2000 gynecological smears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 molecular pathology case</td>
<td>0 molecular pathology case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NO interim exam(s)
NO competency levels set
CERTIFICATION EXAM: 2 days exam

1st day: practice (autopsy and histopathology)
2nd day: theoretical (methods, general pathology, organ-specific pathology)
Diagnostic cytopathology

Basis: 60 months pathology
+ 24 months cytopathology formation

Diagnostic molecular genetics

Basis: 60 months pathology or forensic pathology or laboratory medicine or clinical genetics or microbiology
+ 24 months molecular genetics formation
Recertification: no such system exists
Looking for the reasons….

• Before 1989
  • Poor service was the „standard” – lost demand (and hope) for quality
  • Healthcare was not unequivocally defined (and understood) as a service

• After 1989
  • Increasing demand for high quality services
  • Healthcare also more and more understood as „service”
  • Administratively, CME system introduced in healthcare

BUT
  • EQA system is still missing as a mandatory component of our work
  • ISO 15189 standards have not been introduced
Shortage of pathologists

Little chance to specialize

Timar J. Magyar Tudomány, July 2019, DOI: 10.1556/2065.180.2019.7.8

(Data from a study in the field of pathology speciality, 2015)
Status quo 1: Continuous Medical Education

• Mandatory collection of **CME credits** (250/5 years)

• **Mandatory training courses** (surgical pathology case discussions – occasionally organ specific) (50 CME credit, max. 100 CME credits/5 years)

• **Mandatory practice** (3/5 years working as pathologist)

• **Optional training courses** (with or without CME credits) organized by
  • HSP and IAP HD
  • University departments
  • Suppliers of pathology departments (new methods, new reagents, new machines)
  • Pharma (companion diagnostics)
E-learning courses
(assembled following a successful TÁMOP grant application by HSP and Semmelweis University, maintained for 5 years – outdated by now)

for Residents
for Certified pathologists
for Cytopathologist
for Molecular pathologists
• „Friends of Histopathology”: monthly case discussions (1st Dept of Pathology, Semmelweis University)
• Courses organized by the five University Departments and the National Onology Institute Pathology Department
• Conferences
  • Hungarian Society of Pathology (HSP): every other year
  • Young Pathologists’ Forum: every other year
  • Cytodiagnostic section of HSP: every year
  • IAP Hungarian Division (IAP HD):
    • Technology Transfer in Diagnostic Pathology, every other year, organ/organ system specific, in English
    • Pannonia Congress of Pathology: every other year
• HSP: promoting ESP membership
• HSP: the on-line version of American Journal of Surgical Pathology made available for members
• IAP HD: book tender (if the economic situation allows)
• IAP HD: USCAP Club Budapest (recently introduced; on-line USCAP training courses made available)
Status quo 2: External Quality Assurance

- **QualiCont Non Profit Organization**
  - Owned by 4 laboratory societies including HSP
  - Organizes technical EQA rounds 4 times a year – around 50% of pathology units/laboratories participate regularly
  - Gynecological cytology: interpretation EQA recently introduced
  - The cost for a year full program is cca. 500 Euro

- **The system is voluntary**
- **Participation is not funded by social security budget**
  - Lack of pressure for quality from the health government

www.qualicont.com
Addressing the Maintenance of Certification Challenge

The College of American Pathologists Response

M. Elizabeth H. Hammond, MD; Constance M. Filling, MA; Ann R. Neumann, PhD; Henry A. Homburger, MD; for the Education Committee, College of American Pathologists

- **Context.**—The American Board of Medical Specialties Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process will become effective in 2006. The College of American Pathologists (CAP) Education Committee defined pathology-specific competencies within MOC categories and used data from a survey of pathologists to create education courses targeted to each MOC category.

  **Objective.**—To define pathology-specific competencies within MOC categories and to identify priority learning needs for pathologists.

  **Design.**—A 5-step process was completed for defining pathology-specific competencies within MOC categories and creating education courses targeted to competencies identified in each MOC category. A random survey was distributed to identify priority learning needs based on the gap between the importance rating of each knowledge and skill statement and a rating of current level of proficiency in 3 areas.

  **Results.**—Specific competencies and knowledge and skill statements were identified for each MOC competency category. Findings indicate pathologists believe they are poorly prepared for practice in competency categories related to systems-based practice and practice-based learning and improvement.

  **Conclusions.**—The CAP has focused education efforts on identifying a process for defining and responding to the MOC challenge. Pathologists have told us that they have significant needs for learning in specified areas and the CAP will focus development of education courses to meet those identified needs.

*(Arch Pathol Lab Med. 2005;129:666–675)*
ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, JUDGMENT, AND SKILLS

The CC examination is mandatory for all participants in CC. It is given twice each year in Spring (March) and Fall (August) sessions and may be taken as soon as the 8th year of the CC 10-year cycle. An assessment covering a certification must be passed no later than the tenth year from the date of issuance. Please view the CC Examination Registration Dates & Fees section below for exam session dates. Satisfactory completion of the examination will meet the assessment requirement for any certifications the exam covered. Passed exams do not change any program deadlines or certification expiration dates.

The CC exam registration form automatically populates on the CC Program page during open registration for each session if the diplomate is eligible. A diplomate is eligible to register for CC examinations beginning in the 8th year of each 10-year cycle if their first three (3) CC reporting forms have been submitted and approved and he/she is currently meeting all CC requirements.

The CC examination is based on the same proven psychometric principles used in the primary certification examinations. The examinations will be criterion referenced. Aggregate results of the CC examinations in each primary and subspecialty area are published annually in ABPath's newsletter.

General CC Examination Information
The **CC examination is mandatory for all participants in CC**. It is given twice each year in Spring (March) and Fall (August) sessions and may be taken as soon as the 8th year of the CC 10-year cycle. **An assessment covering a certification must be passed no later than the tenth year from the date of issuance.**
„Hungarian orange”

„A little smaller, yellow and sour, but it is ours”

(Péter Bacsó: The Witness, 1969)
Conclusion

• Certification in Hungary is a reality
• Recertification in Hungary still remains an illusion in the present circumstances
Thank you for your attention