

# Shaping the future of Pathology in sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century

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# IAP African Assembly Round table discussion

# **Title: Shaping the future of Pathology in sub-Saharan Africa**

A: What is the vision?

B: How do we achieve the vision?

- A case for active intervention and restructuring of pathology practice, training and education
- What are challenges that exist and "must" be addressed?
- What can we do to put pathology on the path to excellence even in the face of inadequate and unchanging resources



- How did we get to the current state?
  - Pathology decline is an integral part of the decline in quality of care across the continent
    - Product of political stability and underfunding for many years, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s.
  - Although many African countries are now politically stable we have lost a lot of ground over the last 30+ years
  - Current funding levels do not keep pace with inflation, are insufficient to maintain on going services, have no buffer for fluctuations in market cost of supplies and reagents and often have no or inadequate provision for capital development

- The challenges and constraints faced by the African pathologists and the practice of pathology can be simply summarized as follows:
  - Lack of or inadequate infrastructure
  - Inadequate personnel including both pathologists and technical personnel
  - Lack of / or poor funding for simple things as reagents etc



- In what other major areas have we lost ground?:
  - Inadequate opportunities for updating the knowledge base of practicing pathologists in a sustainable way
  - Inability to maintain and / or enhance the quality of training of current pathology trainees and technical staff
  - Inability to address the need for training in appropriate new technologies when relevant to the level of practice
  - Significant compromise in the maintenance of continuous quality improvement and quality assurance
  - Lack of advocacy to both private funding agencies (local and international) and government / ministries of health with significant loss of international funding.



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- We must define our goals and areas that need major improvement:
- Strategies need to be developed for improving
  - Pathology diagnostic service including modalities for ensuring uniform standards across all regions
  - Regional educational training programs both in basic clinical knowledge and research techniques / methodology including knowledge transfer and application of newer technologies
  - Clinical and translational research that will produce appropriate information that is critical for policy making decisions
    - The key word is that **we must pull together and leverage available resources**



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**Actions by pathology organizations such as  
IAP: some suggestions**



- The first step is to **EDUCATE, EDUCATE AND EDUCATE** ourselves
    - As the adage goes - “He or she who does not know and does not know that he or she does not know is a fool”
- In other words
- Recognizing our deficiencies and inadequacies and taking steps to fill in the information gap and rectify them is wisdom
  - The theme and subthemes for this conference are consistent with this approach



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- Second step is to put together a task force or implementation committees after a definition of the problem/s
- Identify things that can be done to enhance the quality of diagnostics even if the funding situation does not change



# Quality Assurance Needs

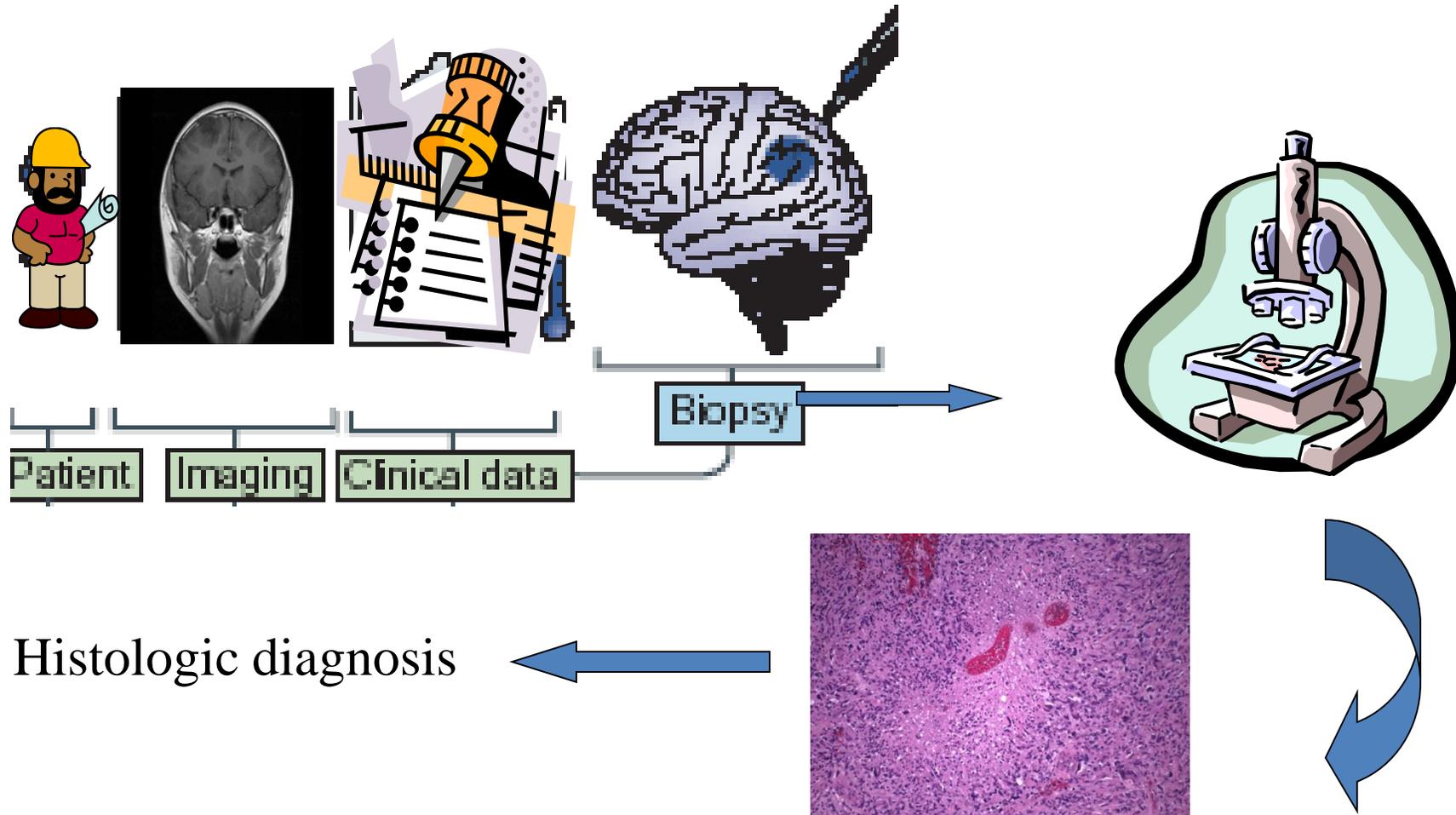
- Standard operating procedures and training of personnel at all levels
- Quality control of specimen collection, fixation, processing, tissue sections and staining
- Quality assurance of diagnosis - internal and external review
- Documentation of errors with remediation
- On-site assessment



# Establish Best Practices

- Each laboratory needs to develop SOPs.
  - Identify current QA/QC processes, determine if they meet standards for best practices
- Establish an external quality assurance program
- Establish an effective consultation support network
  - Invest in standard telepathology imaging systems.
- Develop “Centers of Excellence”
- Develop metrics for success and timelines for milestones

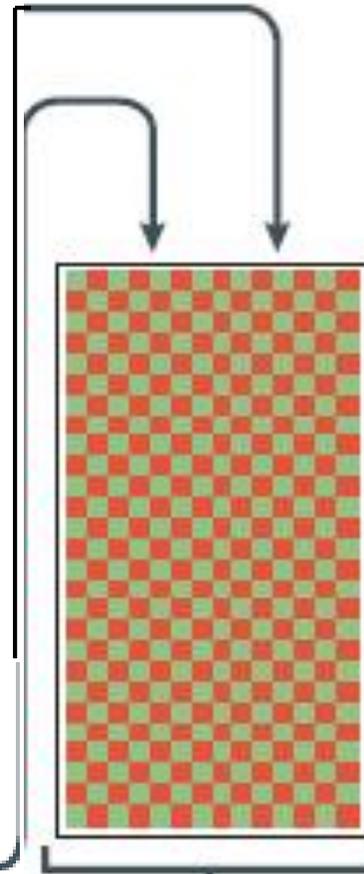
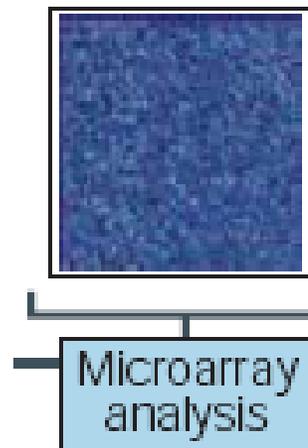
# Traditional diagnosis of cancer is based primarily on histologic features



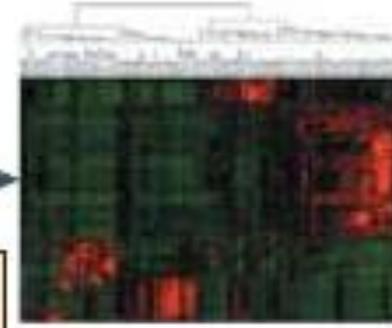
# Application of newer technologies

Large cohort of tumors

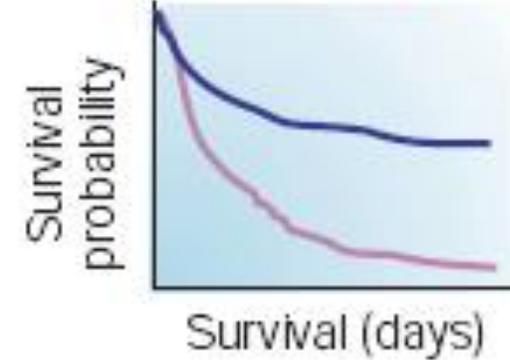
**Substratification  
of tumors with  
similar histology  
but different  
biologic behavior**



Unsupervised analysis



Supervised analysis



Clinical data



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- Develop a strategy for acquisition of competence in new technologies
- Systematic development of basic science related research capabilities
  - Training fellowships
  - Development grants



- Ultimate goal of pathology services in SSA:
  - All surgical specimens and biopsies removed in all hospitals receive appropriate and correct pathology diagnosis in a timely manner
  - All cancers are properly diagnosed by pathologists and adequately entered in the databases of their respective cancer registries
  - Pathology services provided at African institutions receive international credibility and are deemed satisfactory for both local and international collaborative studies.

# Above all

- To achieve these goals, change is inevitable
- It cannot be business as usual
- Change is only possible when we develop a new mindset and a paradigm shift





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# **RCPATH International Trainee Support Scheme**

**In general, overseas trainees tend not to familiarise themselves with:**

- The College
- The College's specialty curricula;
- The way specialty training is undertaken in the UK;
- Examination regulations and guidelines

**All specialty trainees in the UK are given an opportunity to attend an induction day ('New Trainee Welcome Day') at the College.**

- To introduce new Trainee Pathologists to the College and its role
- To meet and network with College Officers and trainees from other Pathology Specialties
- To understand Pathology Training Programmes and the support available



- ❖ **To provide structured support, advice, training and guidance to overseas doctors and scientists who are planning to sit the College's FRCPath Part 1 and/or Part 2 examinations.**
- ❖ **To encourage prospective candidates to register with the College at least 12-18 months prior to the date they intend to sit the College's FRCPath examinations**

**The aim is to provide overseas trainees with an overview and introduction to:**

- **The College's Histopathology Curriculum (core)**
- **How specialty training in Histopathology is structured and delivered in the UK (core)**
- **The International Trainee Support Scheme (including the role of mentors and what will be expected of International Trainees) (core)**
- **Work-place based assessments (including the College LEPT system) (core)**
- **College examination regulations, guidelines & policies (core)**
- **The National Health Service (optional)**

**Successful completion of the induction will ensure that Scheme Trainees have adequate knowledge and understanding of the above core elements.**

## Personal development action plan

- **To be developed and agreed with your assigned mentor.**
- **Directly addresses any gaps in knowledge, understanding, skills or behaviours identified in the self-assessment.**
- **PDAP will include goals, proposed activities to be undertaken by the trainee and timescales.**
- **PDAP will be supported by access to the College's e-portfolio ('Learning Environment for Pathology Trainees – LEPT System')**



UK Trainees	International Trainee Support Scheme
Structured training programme, which follows the College's curricula & assessment framework.	Access to supported guidance, structured & personalised action plan – following the College's curricula & assessment framework.
Trainee Welcome Day	Trainee Induction, Assessment & Handbook
Educational Supervisor	Scheme Mentor
Representation through the College's Trainee Advisory Committee	Representation through the establishment of an International Trainee Forum
Workplace-based assignments	Workplace-based assignments
E-Portfolio (LEPT System)	E-Portfolio (LEPT System)
Experience of working in UK health service (NHS)	Medical Training Initiative (MTI) Clinical Attachments & Observerships Online courses & in-country teaching <small>(where possible)</small>
Exam preparation courses	Exam preparation workshops & courses (online & in-country)



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- **The Scheme is designed to assist international trainees in preparing for the College's FRCPath examinations through the provision of structured support, guidance, directed learning and mentoring.**
- **The Scheme is not a guarantee that trainees will pass the FRCPath examination.**
- **Passing the FRCPath examination does not guarantee employment in the UK and the Scheme is not a route to employment in the UK.**
- **This is a Virtual Scheme: using online communications and**

- **MTI (PATH) SCHEME**

- Designed to allow international medical graduates to undertake pathological training in their specialty in the UK for up to maximum of 24 months
- The placements have to be approved by the local Deanery/ Local Education & Training Board (LETB)
- Launched by the Department of Health in 2009
- Government Authorised Exchange (GAE)- sub category of the Tier 5 visa category
- Application needs to be supported by the College in order to obtain Certificate of Sponsorship to the GMC registration.
- Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath) acts as ‘professional sponsor’
- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) acts as visa sponsor issuing the Tier 5 Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

Request an application pack by emailing the College’s MTI Officer Zuzana Lescisinova [zuzana.lescisinova@rcpath.org](mailto:zuzana.lescisinova@rcpath.org) or email to [mti@rcpath.org](mailto:mti@rcpath.org).

For further information regarding the MTI (Path) Scheme please visit our website:

<https://www.rcpath.org/international/international-medical-science-graduates/medical-training-initiative-mti-pathology.html>