



PATH 601

Forensic Pathology

Elective Description

This elective introduces forensic pathology. The student will learn the differences between hospital and forensic autopsies, natural and non-natural causes of death, and types of wound presentations associated with non-natural causes of death.

Credit: 2-4 semester credits

Prerequisites: PATH 600

Course Structure. This elective is an observational and hands-on experience with a medical examiner. Although all students on clinical clerkships should have the opportunity to see a hospital autopsy, the medical examiner's office experience is quite different.

Entrustable Professional Activities

As a fourth-year student, the focus of skills development are those tasks important for entering residency training:

- Gather a history and perform a physical exam
- Prioritize a differential diagnosis following a clinical encounter
- Recommend and interpret common diagnostic and screening tests
- Enter and discuss orders and prescriptions
- Document a clinical encounter in the patient record
- Provide an oral presentation of a clinical encounter
- Form clinical questions and retrieve evidence to advance patient care
- Give or receive a patient handover to transition care responsibility
- Collaborate as a member of an inter-professional team
- Recognize a patient requiring urgent or emergent care and initiate evaluation and management
- Obtain informed consent for tests and/or procedures
- Perform general procedures of a physician
- Identify systems failures and contribute to a culture of safety and improvement

General Course Objectives

Medical Knowledge

- Observe and cooperate with the police at crime scenes as applicable.
- Learn the methods involved in chain of custody of physical evidence
- Recognize the common post-mortem changes in a body dying from any cause.
- Learn how dead bodies are identified, and the uncertainties involved with each – especially identification by family members.
- Perform routine portions of an autopsy as applicable.

- Collect specimens for toxicology and chemistry, including femoral blood, heart's blood, urine, bile, vitreous, gastric contents, liver, and brain as applicable in individual cases.
- Recognize and explain the external and internal lesions seen in unnatural death.
- Take autopsy photographs properly, including ruler, identification, and color standard card.
- Get familiar with autopsy reports. Try preparing your own version of a preliminary and/or final autopsy report. Complete a death certificate properly.
- Generally, preview / review anatomic pathology and toxicology.

Patient Care

- Speak with a bereaved family, police investigator, and/or prosecutor as appropriate.
- Carry one's knowledge of injury learned in the medical examiner's office into the clinical setting, where one may need to recognize violence when living people aren't always telling the truth.
- **NOTE: On this rotation, it is essential that students have NO conversations with members of the press, families or general public about the medical examiner's business.**

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

- Demonstrate basic autopsy prosection skills, as well as the ability to prepare a provisional and final anatomic diagnosis and epicrisis (final note).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS and Other Resource Material

Spitz WU, Spitz JD, Fischer RS, Clark R. 2006. *Spitz and Fisher's Medicolegal Investigation of Death: Guidelines for The Application of Pathology to Criminal Investigation*. Charles Thomas [ISBN-13: 978-0398075446]

Dolinak, D, E Matshes, and EO Lew. 2005. *Forensic Pathology: Principles and Practice*. Elsevier, Inc [ISBN 0-12-219951-0]

Saukko, P and B. Knight. 2015. *Knight's Forensic Pathology*. 4th edition. Oxford University Press. [ISBN-9780340972533]. 3rd edition:

<https://www.inventati.org/sabotage/images/6/6e/7856e6154d66b52cc0886ea3b75767d3.pdf>

Evaluation

The evaluation will include the entrustable professional activities. The clerkship preceptor will evaluate those relevant to this clerkship experience.

GRADES

This elective is graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

POLICIES

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University holds its students to the highest standards of intellectual integrity. Therefore, the attempt of any student to pass any examination by improper means, present work which the student has not performed or aid and abet a student in any dishonest act may result in disciplinary action including immediate dismissal. Any student witnessing or observing a perceived violation of academic dishonesty is required to report it as outlined in the Guidelines. Students failing to report an observed violation may also receive disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance of lectures and laboratories is based on the University's stated attendance policy. Refer to the Student handbook for more information.

CONDUCT

The University expects all students to be responsible individuals who possess the highest standards of integrity, honesty and personal conduct. These traits are prerequisites to independent learning, professional development, the successful performance of academic and clinical assignments, and the conduct of one's personal life. Accordingly, students are expected to adhere to a standard of behavior consistent with the University's high standards at all times off and on campus. Compliance with institutional rules and regulations, in addition to city, state and federal laws, is expected.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

Trinity Medical Sciences University must respect and observe the right and privileges of copyright holders, obey the United States Copyright Act and preserve the integrity of its internal network systems. All students must sign the technology and software use policy. A copy of this policy may be obtained from the Information and Technology Department.

DRESS CODE

All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional appearance at all times. During years one and two and while on campus. Medical students are required to wear scrubs or white coats with appropriate dress. Appropriate dress for clinical students includes business slacks with open-collar shirt for men, and business slacks or skirt with professional shirt or sweater for women.

Trinity School of Medicine Faculty Contact Information

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