

How Much Pathology Should I Know for My Away Rotation/Elective/Observership?

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Hi Pathology Friends,

Below are my recommendations on how to prepare your pathology knowledge and away rotation. At the medical student or pre-residency level, you are by no means expected to be a pro at histology, autopsy, or in laboratory medicine. In this blog post, I have compiled some resources that I used as a medical student on my pathology away rotations which I found to be helpful. They mostly apply to surgical pathology rotations but there are some helpful clinical pathology (CP) tips as well. In this post, I will be focusing on references to use for pathology knowledge on your rotation, as opposed to tips on how to set up an away rotation, observership, or elective. Please visit the main page of MatchToPath to see our Elective/Observer Opportunities Portal to see a list of institutions accepting applications for these opportunities! I hope these pathology resources make for a smoother away rotation. Congrats on your decision to pursue the coolest medical specialty out there!

1. My top recommendation is to [ask a pathology resident or fellow](#) for assistance if you have any questions about pathology. Questions about the logistics of the away rotation itself might be best directed to the rotation coordinator (usually an administrative assistant) or the rotation director (usually an attending pathologist). . If you are at an away rotation, there's a good chance you are interested in the program. By asking a pathology trainee for help on what you're seeing under the microscope, you:
 - a. Establish a personal connection with that individual and with the program
 - b. It demonstrates interest in what you are learning

Oftentimes, they will connect with a textbook in the library or help you narrow down your differential with a difficult unknown specimen. At the very least, you now have a friend in a new city or program!

Use the [library textbooks](#). They are free and readily available. I recommend the Expert Consult series of books for surgical pathology. List the cell features you spot on your initial impression, go to the textbooks, and find a picture that matches your description.

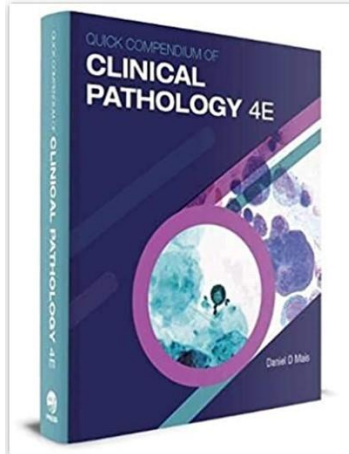
ExpertPath is a digital resource for residents and fellows that follows a similar principle, but you may not have access to Xpertpath during your rotation as a medical student. Please see the list of summary textbooks to at least put you in the ballpark for either AP or CP.

2. It can be helpful to know the basics of normal histology. Pathology, as you will learn, is all about pattern recognition. If you can pick up normal from abnormal/malignant, you'll be leagues ahead of your peers for your first day in a pathology rotation/residency. If you can name a diagnosis with the help of textbooks, you will really impress your preceptor.
 - a. **Molavi and the last section of the Quick Reference Handbook for Surgical Pathology** list commonly used cell morphology and architecture phrases to help you identify a diagnosis! Similar to anatomy lab, you need to know the language of pathology in order to appropriately communicate how you came up with your diagnosis. I can't tell you how many times I couldn't think of the name of the lesion, but I could describe it. The attending was still impressed. I knew the correct language, then the resident would be put on the spot to come up with a diagnosis.
3. Utilize **PathElective.com**. This resource was designed to help supplement medical student and resident pathology education. The modules are sorted by sub-specialty and contain high-yield information to prepare you each day for your rotation. I recommend watching the modules to prepare yourself for common pathologies you will likely come across during sign-out.
4. Ask to **preview cases or look through study slide boxes**. The latter are a hidden gem in the pathology department. They contain slides of rare tumors and classic examples of pathology that you should know about. Often on rotations when there was downtime, I would spend time looking through slides on my own to formulate a diagnosis, then read up on the features of each entity for my own education. You can also ask residents for their expertise on the slide. It is an excellent way to show interest and to learn. Plus you will learn a couple tricks on diagnosing pathology along the way!

Recommended Text Books

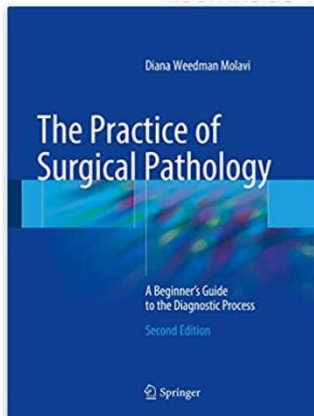
CP Resource

https://www.amazon.com/Quick-Compendium-Clinical-Pathology-4th/dp/0891896678/ref=sr_1_fkmr2_1?crid=2Z25CDE2UJIUY&keywords=ascp+quick+compendium&qid=1668027543&srefix=ascp+qui%2Caps%2C113&sr=8-1-fkmr2

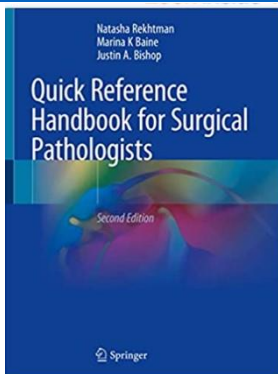


AP Resources

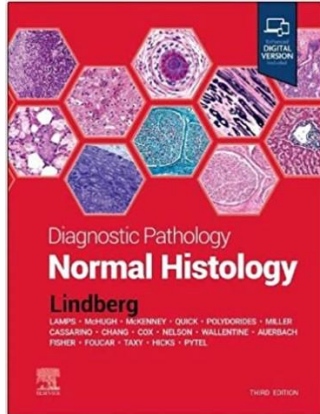
https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Surgical-Pathology-Beginners-Diagnostic/dp/3319592106/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=molavi+surgical+pathology&qid=1668025672&prefix=molavi+%2Caps%2C147&sr=8-1



https://www.amazon.com/Quick-Reference-Handbook-Surgical-Pathologists/dp/3319975072/ref=sr_1_9?crid=37LNOGMLPHXFB&keywords=surgical+pathology&qid=1668025725&sprefix=surgical+pathology%2Caps%2C116&sr=8-9



https://www.amazon.com/Diagnostic-Pathology-Histology-Matthew-Lindberg/dp/0323834140/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3CXXL7RZFY34&keywords=normal+histology+lindberg&qid=1668025818&sprefix=normal+histology%2Caps%2C108&sr=8-1



Normal Histology Website

<https://www.histologyguide.com/>

IHC and fun facts

<https://www.pathologyoutlines.com/>

Pathology Student – in addition to online courses, there are “Path Bites,” which are daily emailed pathology lessons! <https://www.pathologystudent.com/>