

BIOPSY – Importance of Expert Pathology Opinion

Compiled by Charles (Chuck) Maack – Prostate Cancer Advocate

We often hear of erroneous pathology readings of biopsy testing. This often results because only one pathologist provided the reading without being confirmed by a second pathologist. Or even if so, neither were experts in recognizing prostate cancer unless significantly present. And it is possible mistakes like this that you regularly see remarks from Medical Oncologists like Stephen Strum and from many of we advocates who have been researching and studying our disease that all biopsies should either be initially reviewed by a known expert in identifying prostate cancer under the microscope (of which there are only a half dozen or so on which we rely), or sent to one of these experts for a "second opinion" to have more certainty of the biopsy result.

Many times we read of men with biopsy results that either indicate no cancer present or only a single tissue sample evidencing no more than Grade 3 and near insignificant percentage present, yet an elevating PSA, so the decision is either opting for an invasive procedure (they are all invasive to some degree) or Active Surveillance/Watchful Waiting because of their uncertainty. A second opinion with the tissue samples sent to an expert pathologist, and even a urine sampling following a vigorous massage of the prostate sent to Bostwick Laboratories for a PCA3Plus test would better ascertain the validity of the initial biopsy of the likelihood of cancer presence. I've been told by a representative from Bostwick Labs that Medicare (therefore likely most insurers, but check with your insurer to be sure) covers this test.

An explanation of the PCA3 test (known as the PCA3Plus test by Bostwick Laboratories) can be reviewed by clicking on the URLs below, and I've followed that with a list of pathologists known to have expertise in reading biopsy tissue samples.

<http://www.medscape.com:80/viewarticle/574379>

http://www.psa-rising.com/wirebird/bostwick_pca3plus06.html

PATHOLOGY:

Importance of Expert Pathology Opinion:

Despite the fact that the Gleason score might NOT change after an expert review, the reality is that more often it does. However, the issue is who did the first review.

There are talented pathologists who are focused on prostate cancer and also two national labs who are focused on PC as well.

The Gleason score is a critical item; it is used as a variable in virtually every prognostic and treatment algorithm. An accurate GS mandates an expert pathology opinion from a PC pathology expert. The ones that I am most familiar with include:

A second opinion on the microscopic pathology is usually covered by insurance but if not, runs about \$500 pending on what is done. A copy of the original pathology report with the actual slides or recuts from the tissue block are sent to the outside reviewer. Your primary care doctor or you can initiate such a 2nd opinion but you need to request this and ask for a specific physician or lab to be used.

Bostwick Laboratories/ Pathologist David Bostwick Virginia - Corporate Headquarters 4355 Innslake Drive, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Phone: 1-800-214-6628

<https://www.bostwicklaboratories.com/patientservices/primary.html>

Fax: 804-288-6568

(and when samples are sent in, they should be accompanied by a request that ONLY Dr. Bostwick perform the review)

Jon Epstein (Hopkins) 410-955-5043 or 410-955-2162 (Dr. Epstein does not do ploidy analysis)

David Grignon, Centennial Professor of Pathology, Vice Chair for Clinical Programs, Indiana University School of Medicine, Clarion Pathology Laboratory, 350 West Eleventh St. Room 6014, Indianapolis, IN 46202 317-491-6685

Jon Oppenheimer, Owner and Chief Pathologist, Oppenheimer Urologic Reference Lab, Nashville, Tennessee, 888-868-7522 JPathologist@gmail.com

M. Scott Lucia, Director, Prostate Diagnostic Laboratory, Co-Director, Prostate Cancer Research Laboratories, University of Colorado, Denver – School of Medicine at Fitzsimons Dept. of Pathology, 303-724-3470 E-mail: Scott.Lucia@uchsc.edu

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