



PATHOLOGISTS WORK IN MANY AREAS OF THE MEDICAL LABORATORY

A pathologist usually serves as Director of the Laboratory. In the blood bank, pathologists and medical technologists insure that the blood or blood products which you receive are safe for you. In microbiology, microorganisms-bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites-which can cause infections are identified and the most effective drugs to treat a particular infection can be determined.

In clinical chemistry, many hundreds of tests are available which measure the amounts of materials such as glucose and cholesterol in the blood, urine, spinal fluid, or other body fluids. In immunology, tests that measure the body's response to infection or disease are performed. Many infections, including hepatitis and AIDS, are diagnosed by detecting the antibodies that the patient's immune system makes to fight the infection. In diseases such as arthritis and multiple sclerosis, the body actually makes antibodies against itself.

A popular perception is that the pathologist's major responsibility is performing autopsies. Although an autopsy is an important part of the diagnosis and treatment of deadly diseases and provides valuable information to the patient's doctor and family, it is only a small part of the typical pathologist's practice. Pathologists who specialize in performing autopsies to investigate unexpected or suspicious deaths and determine the causes are known as forensic pathologists or medical examiners.