

Change is coming to the NCPTS too

2023 has been a year of hard work and unprecedented change for many of us. I'm sure I'm not the only one looking forward to a good break over summer. There will inevitably be consequences for the NCPTS following the introduction of HPV primary screening. A transition year is planned for 2024 to allow future training needs to be assessed and to plan for a new-look NCPTS for future years.

As we approach this crossroad, I wish to express my thanks to all who have contributed towards and participated in NCPTS programmes over the last 12 years.
Ngā mihi, Margaret.

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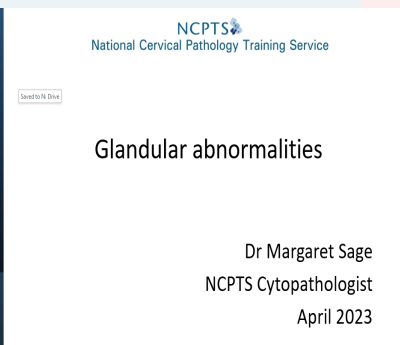


TRAINING FOR HPV PRIMARY SCREENING

Training in 2023 was dominated by preparation for HPV primary screening. **Onsite workshops** were delivered at three laboratory sites in February 2023 to commence the online training programme. Cytoscreeners and cytopathologists were issued with a **training manual of key documents**. From February to August, a **PowerPoint talk with audio (10 mins approx.)** was provided each week, covering a specific aspect of the new screening programme, focussing on using the new report recommendation codes for reporting HPV and cytology samples. Each talk was accompanied by **10 MCQ quiz case questions**, testing the participant's ability to choose the correct report recommendation for the clinical context and given test results. All up, 16 talks and 20 batches of MCQ questions were posted on the NCPTS website between February and August. **Final workshops** were held at the three laboratory sites towards the end of August, to round off the training.

All cytopathologists and cytoscreeners were also required to sit and pass a competency test before embarking on reporting in the HPV primary screening programme after go-live. The cooperation of all staff involved in completing this exercise is greatly appreciated. Becoming confident using the new recommendation codes after 12 September was still a challenge, as we forged those new neural pathways when reporting cases.

HPV primary screening in New Zealand
Ordering and reporting HPV and cytology tests



REPORTING USING HPV PRIMARY SCREENING CODING MANUAL

CONTENTS:

Introduction to this Manual: Page 1

Clinical Practice Guidelines

Page 2: Introduction (Screening age and intervals)

Page 4: Transition to HPV primary screening from current programme

Flowcharts

Page 8: Figure 3a/3b: Transition to HPV

Clinical history: 66 years

ASC-US 18 years previously, normal cervical cytology samples since

Pathway Status: 5 Year Recall

Sample type: Vaginal swab

HPV Result: Not Detected

Cytology: Not available (swab)

Recommendation:

A. H1

B. H7

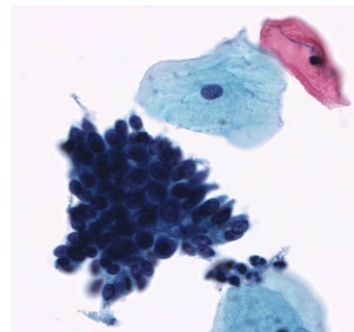
C. H13

D. H18

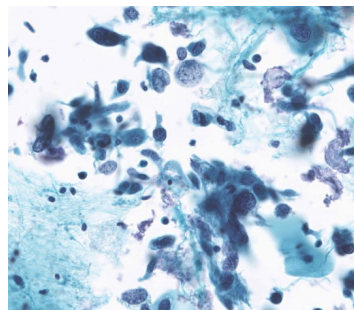
Correct answer is H18.

NCPTS SLIDE SCAN PROJECT

The NCPTS/RCPA project to create 500 digital cervical cytology e-Cases is now complete, with 250 SurePath and 250 ThinPrep cases posted on the RCPA website. The project was truly collaborative on both sides of the Tasman and thanks are due to all who contributed. Gwenda Lawrence (cytoscience) annotated all the cases online, completed the template for the RCPA and re-dotted all the glass slides after screening, Drs Andrew Miller, Richard Massey, Wendy McBurnie and Margaret Sage contributed to sourcing and developing the cases, and Melinda Paterson coordinated all those involved and kept track of all the batches of slides as they travelled across to Sydney and back. In Australia, the RCPA QAP scanned all the cases and the RCPA uploaded them to their website once each batch of cases was completed. The project was jointly funded by the RCPA and the NCPTS.



Digital image: AIS ThinPrep)



Digital image: SCC (SurePath)

ANATOMIC PATHOLOGY REGISTRAR TRAINING IN 2023

Our junior registrars attended an online workshop in June run by Wendy McBurnie. Morphology workshops for senior pathology registrars were held in October via Zoom using SurePath slides and in person using ThinPrep slides. Thank you so much to all our contributing consultants: Diane Kenwright, Sadiq Al-Sakini, Amanda Charlton and Wendy McBurnie.

Sets of teaching slides in ThinPrep, SurePath and cervical histopathology were again circulated to all pathology registrar training sites and digital mock exam sets were provided in both ThinPrep and SurePath as practice for examination candidate registrars before the RCPA Cytology examination in June. Thanks again to Kathryn Payne for supplying the cervical histopathology cases.



Sadiq Al-Sakini teaches at the seniors' Auckland workshop

With the reduction in cervical cytology across Australasia and fewer training sites where cervical cytology is reported, the RCPA are considering major changes to registrar training in cervical cytology. A definite decision is anticipated early next year. Business as usual is expected for 2024 RCPA examinations — registrars are advised to stay closely in touch with the RCPA about requirements for their particular stage of training.

Another consequence of the introduction of HPV primary screening is that unfortunately we are having to farewell Dr Wendy McBurnie (NCPTS Registrar Coordinator) from the NCPTS Training team. Wendy has truly been a delight to work with and has ably run the NCPTS registrar training for the past 2 years. So thanks Wendy, on behalf of the registrars and the NCPTS — we will miss you and wish you all the very best.

No decision will be made about appointing a new Registrar Training Coordinator until the RCPA decision about the future of registrar training in cervical cytology is clear.

CYTOSCIENTISTS/CYTOTECHNICIANS

Two teaching sets of glass slides were circulated to cytoscientists/cytotechnicians at each cytology laboratory, using ThinPrep or SurePath slides. Each set comprised a mix of interesting and difficult cases of educational value across the cytology spectrum.

CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTIONS

Two talks were delivered at the **NZIMLS ASM in Auckland in August**. Diane Kenwright spoke about handling LEEP and Cone biopsies in histopathology and Margaret Sage spoke about the impending introduction of HPV primary screening on 12th September 2023 and the changes that this would involve for the laboratory sector.

The **RCPA ASM was held in Tauranga in October**. Margaret Sage spoke about the introduction of HPV primary screening and the transition across from the previous cytology-based programme. Professor Marilyn Hibma, Pathology Professor at Otago Medical School, presented her research investigating the potential for immunological lymphoid markers in high-grade cervical lesions to predict disease progression.

NCPTS SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Two cytoscientists, Christl Kirstein and Nirup Kumar, both from APS, were funded through NCPTS scholarships to attend the Australian Society of Cytology (ASC) ASM on the Gold Coast in November 2023. Their reports about the conference are available on the NCPTS website.

TRAINING INITIATIVES: PLANS for 2024

1. An expert histopathologist will be engaged to visit New Zealand in the latter half of the year to provide workshops for pathologists in cervical histopathology.
2. The VRPCC will be reviewed. The VRPCC workbook needs to be rewritten to incorporate HPV primary screening.
3. A National Training Day is likely to be held online in August/September 2024
4. Two teaching sets of slides will be distributed to cytoscientists/cytotechnicians.
5. Registrar training will focus on support for registrars sitting the RCPA examination in June 2024. Workshops are on hold until the future direction of training in cervical cytology is announced by the RCPA. The usual round of teaching glass sets will be circulated to all training sites
6. Scholarship funding will be announced early in 2024 for attendance at international and Australasian conferences in 2024.
7. The NCPTS will conduct a survey of sector staff to ascertain future training needs and will work with the NCSP and the National Training Committee to design a refreshed NCPTS for the future

NATIONAL TRAINING COMMITTEE (NTC)

The current NTC committee members are:

Diane Kenwright (Chair), Peter Bethwaite (RCPA representative), Kathryn Payne, Amanda Charlton, Ursula Van Den Heever, Christine Hide, Tanya Fulton.

Ex officio members: Margaret Sage, Wendy McBurnie, Christl Kirstein, Ashika Bissoon (NCPTS Training Team)

Administrative assistance: Melinda Paterson (NCPTS Administrator)



Thanks again to all who have contributed to the work of the NCPTS in 2023. Take good care, stay safe and stay well! We wish you all a well-earned and refreshing break over summer.

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