

CYTOTECHNOLOGIST II

This is advanced professional laboratory work in the evaluation of both gynecological and non-gynecological (fluid) cytology specimens to identify cancer and pre-cancerous lesions, with 20-25% of the time as a quality control specialist and/or lead worker. Employees work in the cancer cytology laboratories in the Division of Health Services, the North Carolina Memorial Hospital, and at East Carolina University.

The majority of the time is spent in the same evaluation of smears identified in the Cytotechnologist I. In addition, employees in this class spend 20-25% reviewing slides completed by lower level cytotechnologists for quality control purposes. Problems and discrepancies are referred to employees from lower level Cytotechnologists which may require further discussion with supervisor and pathologist. Employees also review problem cases, and closely review most of the work of new employees. Work may include orienting and training new employees, participating in the evaluation of new employees, working with the pathologist on questionable cases, reviewing and following up on pathologist and quality control reports, and filling in for the supervisor. Employees are accountable for the work of others since they are reviewing smears for quality control. Work may include other related duties as determined by management. Work is supervised by higher-level laboratory personnel or pathologist.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Employees spend 20-25% of the time reexamining gynecological and non-gynecological cancer smears examined at a lower level, organizing and directing the daily work flow, troubleshooting problem areas, and training staff. Although the types of specimens examined are limited in variety, the knowledges associated with the identification of pathophysiological cell morphology are more detailed than seen at the Cytotechnologist I level.

Intricacy - Utilizing a binocular, multihead microscope, employees examine and reexamine gynecological and non-gynecological cancer smears which requires relating any relevant patient medical information. Employees review slides read by lower level cytotechnologists and resolve questionable test interpretations. Employees examine cell morphology and coloring for evidence of pathological conditions indicating the presence of cancer; estimate the number of cells; and describe the slide and relate variations in cell morphology which may be a result of extraneous factors such as hormone therapy. Work requires the employees to classify smears into negative, atypical, suspicious, positive, and invasive based on a complete examination. Each slide may have characteristics of each level. Employees may review slides of lower level Cytotechnologists; however, slides which are suspicious, positive, and invasive are reexamined and signed out by a pathologist or the technical resource.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a complete understanding of the theoretic application of procedures, cancer morphology, instrumentation utilized in the work area, in addition to an understanding of the clinical interface.

Guidelines - Test procedures and instrumentation guides are available in the laboratory procedure manual. Employees are expected to utilize appropriate textbooks, manuals, and resource personnel in resolving problems associated with maintaining quality control. Administrative directives are supplied and available from supervisors when problems arise in the daily operational functioning.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Work assignments are typically made on a daily basis. Following orientation to the work area, work objectives, assignments, and deadlines are understood. Employees may receive instructions regarding theoretical application from the pathologist and/or technical resource.

Nature of Review - Technical review is provided by higher-level laboratory personnel and/or pathologist through the review of abnormal or unusual test results.

Scope of Decisions - Employees perform, interpret, and review tests which have diagnostic impact upon hospital and private physician patients, and local health department clients. Employees review and reevaluate previously examined slides to ensure quality in reporting results.

Consequence of Decisions - Inaccurate review and/or performance of tests could result in an inappropriate, or lack of, diagnosis and treatment for the patient.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work contacts are usually with laboratory personnel, students, pathologist, and clinicians within the same or related technological field.

Nature and Purpose - Interactions with laboratory personnel are to receive, convey, instruct, and resolve work assignments and questionable test results. Interactions with clinicians and pathologist are to discuss test results and their significance.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Work is performed in a medical laboratory where conditions are generally agreeable.

Hazards - Employees are required to sit in one position for prolonged periods of time, and eyestrain can result from the continuous use of the microscope. There is some exposure to toxic chemicals.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Considerable knowledge of cytology as it relates to the diagnosis of cancer cells in pap smears. Considerable knowledge of fixing and staining procedures used to prepare slides and of microscopy. Ability to examine a slide, and concentrate for long periods of time utilizing a microscope. Ability to make accurate observations and a diagnosis. Ability to independently plan and complete work. Ability to supervise others and troubleshoot questionable results. Ability to instruct medical technology students and other health professionals in laboratory procedures. Physical ability to perform continual microscopic examinations and normal color perception.

Minimum Education and Experience - Bachelor's degree in cytology from an appropriately accredited institution and two years of experience in the assigned area; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.