

[Practice beyond the microscope, a memoir: My years as a doctor's doctor](#)

written by CAP TODAY
February 19, 2021

February 2021—When I entered the practice of pathology the role was described as being a “doctor’s doctor.” That reflected the fact that physicians turn to the laboratory for so many tests that define diseases and determine the response to treatment, a reality true today. But my memories are of the more personal interactions with clinicians over the years as I pursued the practice of pathology beyond the microscope, and often beyond the laboratory.



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[From the President's Desk: Important wins but work continues](#)

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February 2021—In late December, the U.S. Congress passed a COVID-19 relief bill that included two key items for pathologists—measures that the CAP pushed hard to achieve on our behalf. The document is more than 5,000 pages and addresses a large number of subjects, including thoroughbred horses. Here, I’d like to offer a brief analysis of the elements that affect our profession.



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[Clinical pathology selected abstracts](#)

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February 2020—SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted through respiratory droplets, close person-to-person contact, and infected surfaces. Those with COVID-19 often present with fever and respiratory symptoms, and diagnosis relies on detecting the virus through specimens from the upper and lower respiratory tract. However, an increasing number of patients are exhibiting such gastrointestinal symptoms as diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. A growing number of studies are reporting the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in stool samples and anal swabs, generating interest in research focused on a fecal-oral route of transmission. The authors conducted a study to assess the clinical relevance of testing stool samples and anal swabs for SARS-CoV-2 and to provide a critical overview of literature addressing possible fecal-oral transmission.



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[Anatomic pathology selected abstracts](#)

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February 2021—SARS-CoV-2 primarily causes pulmonary injury, but it has been implicated in hepatic injury through the use of serum markers and histologic evaluation. The histologic pattern of injury has not been completely described, and studies quantifying viral load in the liver are lacking. The authors conducted a study in which they reported the clinical and histologic findings related to the liver in 40 patients who died of complications of COVID-19. For the study, they subjected a subset of liver tissue blocks to polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for viral RNA. Peak levels of alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) were elevated, with a median ALT peak of 68 U/L (normal up to 46 U/L) and median AST peak of 102 U/L (normal up to 37 U/L). Macrovesicular steatosis was the most common finding, involving 30 (75 percent) patients.

[Molecular pathology selected abstracts](#)

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February 2021—Beta-thalassemia and sickle cell disease are common hereditary conditions that can have life-threatening complications. Both diseases are caused by genetic alterations affecting the beta subunit of hemoglobin. Mutations that reduce or prevent the synthesis of the beta-globin protein cause beta-thalassemia, a disease characterized by inadequate red blood cell production and, therefore, anemia. In contrast, sickle cell anemia results from a specific point mutation in the beta-globin gene that causes the resulting protein to polymerize. These protein polymers form rigid fibers that affect the stability of the red blood cell and cause its characteristic sickling deformity. Destruction of the aberrant red blood cells leads to anemia, and the sickled cells can also cause painful vaso-occlusive episodes and tissue damage.

[Q&A column](#)

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Q.
Can toxicology testing be performed on a person who has been deceased for two years? [Read answer.](#)
Q. Is there a standardized procedure for performing platelet estimates that incorporates the dilution effect for low hemoglobin in anemic patients? The formula I found for platelet estimation works well with low hemoglobin levels but not with levels greater than 13 g/dL. [Read answer.](#)



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Newsbytes

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February 2021—Laboratories involved in requests for proposal for total lab automation systems may want to consider the words of wisdom of Francis of Assisi: “For it is in giving that we receive.”



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Put It on the Board

written by CAP TODAY
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February 2021—The FDA has issued an EUA for Siemens Healthineers’ IL-6 assay to measure the presence of interleukin-6 in human serum or plasma.



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Visby POC COVID-19 PCR test gets CLIA waiver

written by CAP TODAY
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Feb. 17, 2021–Visby Medical announced FDA authorization of the company’s rapid PCR COVID-19 test for use at the point of care by organizations with a CLIA certificate of waiver.



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Bio-Rad enhances InteliQ QC line

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Feb. 12, 2021–Bio-Rad Laboratories has enhanced its InteliQ liquid quality controls product line.



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