

**Q: What training is involved?**

**A:** The prerequisite to becoming an anatomical pathologist is a qualification as a medical practitioner, followed by internship and a minimum of one further year of general clinical residency.

The minimum time for specialist training is five years, in a registrar position accredited by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia. The registrar is trained in the examination of surgical specimens, examination of cytology specimens and the performance of autopsies. Presentation at clinical meetings and participation in research projects also form a significant part of the everyday work.

Once you have completed all the requirements and examinations and are accepted as a Fellow of the College, you are entitled to use the letters FRCPA after your name.

Due to the complexity of modern medicine, many anatomical pathologists continue with further specialised training both in Australia and overseas in specific areas such as dermatopathology, gastrointestinal pathology, paediatric and gynaecological pathology. Specialist training in forensic pathology can also be undertaken as a post-fellowship diploma.

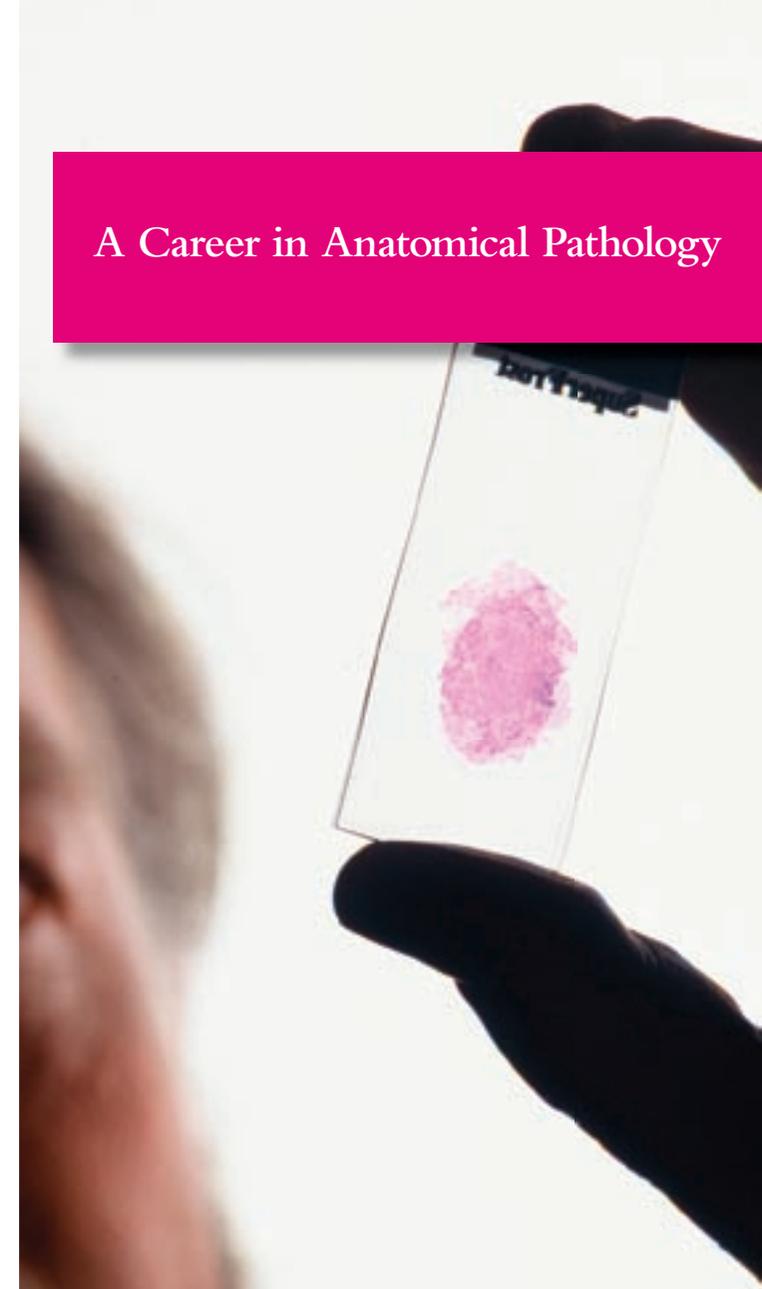
## Medicine is Pathology

For more information  
on becoming an Anatomical Pathologist  
go to the College website at  
[www.rcpa.edu.au](http://www.rcpa.edu.au)

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## A Career in Anatomical Pathology



 **RCPA**  
The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia

# Anatomical Pathology

## Q: What is Anatomical Pathology?

**A:** Anatomical pathology is the study of organs and tissues to help in determining the causes and effects of particular diseases. An anatomical pathologist's findings are fundamental to medical diagnosis, patient management and research.

## Q: What does an Anatomical Pathologist do?

**A:** The work mainly involves histopathology and cytology. Histopathology is concerned with the microscopic examination of tissues, taken either as biopsy samples or resection specimens. These tissues are assessed macroscopically, and material is taken for microscopic examination for the purpose of diagnosis, prognosis and directing appropriate treatment. It is mainly of a problem solving nature.

Cytology is the study of individual cells to detect abnormal cells. These cells are aspirated or obtained from body tissues (e.g. cervical cytology PAP smears of the cervix).



## Q: What personal characteristics does a Anatomical Pathologist need?

**A:** Varying combinations of the following traits:

- a flair for visual pattern recognition
- ability to make critical decisions on a regular and recurring basis
- ability to undertake problem solving activities
- a high level of self motivation
- a methodical approach to work
- an enjoyment of scientific basis of medicine
- ability to work as part of a team as well as autonomously
- communication and interpersonal skills
- teaching skills

## Q: What are the rewards and satisfactions of being an Anatomical Pathologist?

**A:** One of the best aspects of a career in anatomical pathology is the wide variety of cases seen, which never cease to be interesting and challenging.

This specialty provides the scientific foundation for all medical practice. Anatomical pathologists work with almost all medical specialties including general practitioners, using tools of laboratory medicine (histology, cytology), to provide information and advice essential to clinical practice.

Anatomical pathology has an appeal for those seeking flexibility in lifestyle choice.

When compared to other physicians, a pathologist's lifestyle is excellent with little or no on-call work required, leaving time available for family and other interests.

