FRCPath – Evolution not revolution

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Outline

• Why do we have examinations?
• Validity and reliability
• MRCPath/FRCPath
  ï Past
  ï Present
  ï future
• Competence
• Confidence
Postgraduate Examinations

Why?

- Maintenance of professional standards
- GMC requirement
- Public reassurance
Validity

Å Content validity
   ï Does the test measure what it is supposed to measure

Å Face validity
   ï Does the test look valid to candidates, the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other untrained observers?
Reliability

Would candidates achieve the same outcome if the test was repeated?

Mathematical

Can be measured eg

- Cronbach alpha
- Generalisability
History

• College of Pathologists established in 1962
• First Membership examinations in 1964
• ‘General Pathologists’
• Separation into specialties
• Non-medical Fellows/Member
MRCPath Histopathology c 1980s

**Primary**
- Centralised
- MCQ negatively marked, all pathology
- Practical 20x H and E in 3 hours
- Viva

**Final**
- 2x3 hour essay papers
- 3 day practical including autopsy
- 2-4 candidates per centre
MRCPath Histopathology c 1990s

Part 1
- 2x3 hour essay papers
- 3 day practical exam including autopsy
- 2-4 candidates per centre

Part 2
- Further practical exam
- 2-4 candidates per centre
FRCPath Histopathology c 2000s

Part 1
- MCQ/EMQ

Part 2
- 2 day examination - centralised
  - Surgical pathology
  - Gynae and non gynae cytology
  - Long cases
  - OSPEs
  - Frozen sections
  - Macros
FRCPath Histopathology c 2000s

Autopsy

- Non-standardised
- Small number of candidates at each centre
- Different autopsies
- Different supplementary questions
- Different examiners
- Minimal central question setting
FRCPath Histopathology now

- 2 day exam in surgical pathology and diagnostic cytology
  - All material except frozen sections set centrally
  - Surgicals and cytology marked centrally
  - Central moderation of local marking

- Cervical cytology (CHCCT)

- Autopsy (CHAT)
  - Centralised examination
  - Observed autopsy before exam
FRCPath Histopathology – the future

Part 1
- Images
  - Computerised?

Molecular Pathology
- Inevitable
  - Timescale?

Digital imaging
- Virtual slides
  - Same for all
  - Training issues
FRCPath Histopathology – the future

• Modularisation
  • Autopsy and cervical cytology already separate
  • Systems modules taken after attachments
    • On line?
    • On demand?
    • Dilution of expertise?
    • Workplace based assessments instead of exams?
FRCPath Histopathology

**Å Competence**
- Defined by curriculum
- Demonstrated in
  - Routine work
  - WBA

**Å Confidence**
- Develops from repetition
- Routine work important
- Examine – describe - interpret
FRCPath Histopathology

- Slide sets not a substitute for shifting glass
- Pre-exam courses helpful but they are not official FRCPath courses and mock exams may mislead
- All parts of the exam matter
- Routine work helps develop confidence
- Independent reporting helps develop confidence
Summary

Å FRCPath has evolved
Å Validity
  ï Tests the day job
Å Reliability
  ï Improved by centralisation
  ï Could do more
Å Competence and confidence
  ï Both essential
Summary

Å Changes in content
   ï Driven by laboratory technology
   ï If the day job/curriculum changes so must the exam

Å Changes in process
   ï Images in Part 1
   ï Computerisation
   ï Virtual slides
   ï Modularisation
Where are we now?
Good Luck!