



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE HISTOTECHNOLOGY GROUP OF NSW MAY SANTA BE KIND AND HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE CHRISTMAS

Chairman's Message

Well it is the time of the year again where we have an opportunity to unwind after a busy year and indulge in the good things associated with Christmas.

Our committee is busy planing a number of interesting meetings for next year. These include:

- A visit to the University of NSW "Museum of Human Disease".
- A presentation on Nerve Biopsies
- A presentation by Ventana on "Automated IPX"
- A presentation on PCR
- A presentation on Muscles
- A presentation on Prostate antibodies

Following the success of our last Newcastle weekend meeting, we are working on its successor to be held during next year. More information to follow.

Our "NSW Conference" in Canberra is already creating a lot of interest. The "Cut Up" workshop on the Friday is showing signs of being well supported. So please keep the dates clear; the 21st to the 23rd of September. It is being held

at "Ridges Capital Hill", near Manuka. As "Floriade" is on at the same time as the conference, early accommodation bookings will be essential. You will need to make your own accommodation bookings advising you are with the "Histotechnology Group of NSW Conference" as we have special rates. More information to follow early in the New Year.

Have an enjoyable and safe Christmas break. See you next year,

Trevor Hinwood,
Chairperson,
Histotechnology Group of NSW."

Safety - Potassium Permanganate

Potassium Permanganate (or Condy's crystals) is an oxidising agent and the crystalline form or concentrated solutions are corrosive. Solutions of greater than 0.05% strength may cause corrosive burns to the skin and mucous membranes (1). It is used as an oxidizing antiseptic for cleansing and deodorizing suppurative eczematous reactions and wounds, and in baths and wet bandages (2).

Ingestion of dilute solutions can cause brown staining of

the mouth and throat, sore throat, abdominal pains, vomiting and dysphagia. Concentrated solutions or dry crystals can cause swelling and bleeding of lips and tongue, pharyngeal oedema and swelling of the larynx, as well as gastrointestinal burns. Systemic effects do not usually manifest, due to poor absorbance, but can include tachycardia, hypotension, hallucinations, methaemaglobinaemia and cyanosis, metabolic acidosis, haemolysis, pancreatitis and coma. Some effects can be delayed up to 36 h post-ingestion including disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC), cardiac failure and hepato-renal failure (2).

The fatal dose for an adult is 10g, and death usually results from pharyngeal oedema and cardiovascular collapse. Current treatment guidelines include avoidance of gut decontamination, and liberal oral fluids unless perforation is suspected. Indeed, there has been a documented case of fatal poisoning when charcoal was mistaken for KMnO₄. Supportive treatment is the mainstay of treatment thereafter, and if stable after 2h following ingestion of dilute solutions, further treatment is unnecessary. n-

acetylcysteine should, however, be given within the first few hours, in the same dose as used in paracetamol poisoning (1,2).

1. Drs W.A. Temple & N.A. Smith, National Toxicology Group, Dunedin, New Zealand International Programme on Chemical Safety Poisons Information Monograph 409
2. Dhamrait (2003) Anaesthesia 58(6):606.

The Most Unlikely Thing a Histologist Would Hear from a Pathologist

"No, please! Don't recut that broken slide - I can see just fine through the cellophane tape."

"I don't want my slides until noon"

"No problem, I'll wait until the mounting media has set before I look at the slide under oil immersion"

"I would really like to understand what you do, it looks complex. Perhaps I can watch and learn something."

"I want one patient case per folder (20 slide spaces per folder) even if there's only one slide on the case. We process at least 300 cases, 1500 slides, per day."

"There is really no need for a tech to work Saturdays any more. We'll just have someone on call."

"Bubbles make the slide look pretty and fun to look at."

"Don't worry about it - I'll clean the grossing area myself."

But then one histopathologist replied:

"Huh? I do that".

"Here, let me close that lid to the cryostat. You know... if you leave it open all the time, it really frosts up!"

"Would you please show me how you would like breast tissue grossed in - to make your life easier?"

"I will always gross at 3mm or less just to help you out from now on, especially fatty specimens. I will even teach the residents to gross smaller!"

"I'm sorry; I didn't realize you can't embed a 1cm thick piece of tissue."

"You work so hard, and I appreciate it so much! Why

don't you sleep in on Monday? I'll cut my own slides."

"I did immunostaining once, worked for me every time!"

"Please recut the slide thicker, it's too thin"

"I don't need to see the slide. I'll take your word for it."

"I know it's STAT, but you still need your lunch."

"I just need one recut."

And heard in the good old days.... "Can you hold the cigarette for me I need two hands for this".

- As ashes were flicked into the trash can full of paraffin scraps and xylene soaked gauze.....

- And the coffee cup was on top of the microtome

"I just learned grossing from watching CSI, Miami"

Our pathologist left us a note that asked us to do a

"Helicopter stain" on a gastric specimen, so my tech at the time asked him if he wanted us to do that at the airport.

- Perhaps he was thinking of the stain for rotor virus.

Please Note:

CHISTMAS IS CANCELLED

Apparently, YOU told Santa that you have been GOOD this year ...



He died laughing

Editor's Note.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the companies who regularly support our journal by advertising in it. The cost of printing and postage is entirely covered by their support (in fact often we make a small profit!). We wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year. Tony Henwood, Histopathology, The Children's Hospital at Westmead, (email: anthonyh@chw.edu.au).