

Notes on the History of the Canadian Association of Pathologists - Association canadienne des pathologistes

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ABSTRACT

The history of the first 45 years of the Canadian Association of Pathologists-Association canadienne des pathologistes is well documented in an essay published by Henry Letts and John Jacques in 1994. The authors of this article have written an updated essay, focusing instead on the role that the association has played in promoting pathology to the national and international health care communities and to Canadian society.

RESUME

L'essai de Henry Letts et de John Jacques publié en 1994 relate l'histoire des 45 premières années de l'Association canadienne des pathologistes dans ses moindres détails. Les auteurs publient un complément d'information à cet essai, qui se penche sur le rôle de l'Association dans la promotion de la pathologie auprès du public canadien et des communautés de la santé du pays et de l'étranger.

This article is dedicated to Harry Walter Vincent Letts, historian of Canadian pathology, and to all those members of the association who made this story possible.

Emergence

The initial attempt to create a national organization by a group of pathologists within the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) occurred in September 1907 in Montreal. As a separate section, it was named the "Laboratory Section" and lasted until 1932 when it was united with the "Section of Medicine." A further attempt was made by Louis Berger (1895-1948) from l'Université Laval, who began to promote the idea of a new independent organization after the interruption of professional activities during World War II. Unfortunately, Berger died in 1948;

but he had transmitted his ideas to John Drennan Hamilton (1911-2002), at that time a pathologist from Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario.

Berger's idea became reality with the verbal support of the nascent Association des pathologistes du Québec, founded in 1946, and the assistance of the Ontario Association of Pathologists (OAP), founded in 1937. The active participation of members of the OAP and other provincial pathologists' organizations culminated in the first meeting of the new Canadian Association of Pathologists (CAP-ACP) at the University of Saskatchewan on June 15, 1949.

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Table 1. Sections and Years of Foundation

Section	Year
Cytopathology (Canadian Society of Cytology, CSC)	1961
Experimental Pathology	1979
Laboratory Genetics	1981
Clinical Pathology	1983
Residents	1986
Hematological Pathology	1990
Anatomical Pathology	1990
Neuropathology	2007
Pathologists' Assistants	2007
Forensic Pathology	2007
Patient Safety and Quality Assurance	2009

Table 2. CAP-ACP Committees and Years of Foundation

Committee	Year
Nominating	1949
Membership	1950
Professional Affairs	1950
Local Organizing	1954
Continuing Professional Development	1960
Special Archives	1975
Annual Meeting	1978
Awards	1990
Resource Development	1990
Workload	2009

The meeting was held concurrently with the annual meeting of CMA. Fifteen members from Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta were present and became the founding members of the new association.

Since its beginnings, the administration of CAP-ACP has consisted of a council with representatives from the provincial associations, an executive, sections, and committees. Members of the executive are elected by a general assembly. The sections - with their years of foundation- are presented in Table 1. The committees of CAP-ACP are presented in Table 2.

There are also standing committees and task forces appointed by the executive. Sections and committees have changed names through the years to serve better the interests of the association's membership, and a secretariat, now located in Ottawa, was established in 1990. In the past few years, special interest groups have developed in areas such as education, informatics, international health, tissue banking, and semen analysis. There is also a Medical Humanities in Pathology Club.

The association officially represents the pathology community to federal and provincial authorities and other national and international professional organizations such as CMA, the *Royal* College of Physician and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the American Society of Clinical Pathologists (ASCP), the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the International Academy of Pathology (IAP), the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (WASPaLM), and the International Liaison Committee of Presidents (ILCP). It also works closely with other groups related to laboratory medicine such as the Canadian Chairs of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (CCPLM), the Canadian Society of Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS), and the recently formed Canadian Alliance of Laboratory Medicine (CALM).

Status of Pathologists

CAP-ACP supports the community of pathologists and constantly reviews its objectives to fulfill their needs. One permanent activity is the bringing of provincial societies under a common umbrella with the intent to minimize differences of provincial jurisdiction. The association responds to comments by the media and politicians, making balanced recommendations that defend the interests of pathologists but without ignoring those of society.

One of the initial aims of the association was "to study the various schedules of fees, pension plans, and the general situation of pathologists." Publication of annual income reports and workforce requirements has been an activity of the association since the very beginning. From the early 1970s, it became an important source of information for those looking to obtain employment and/or willing to relocate. In the early 1980s, this information became a CAP-ACP databank used to establish workforce requirements in Canada. When the federal and provincial hospital and medical care insurance programs were introduced in the 1950s and 1970s, CAP-ACP carefully evaluated the impact that such legislation would have on the economic status of its members and advised them accordingly. The association played a successful role in opposing Bill 320 in 1968 ("The Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Act") whereby the federal government proposed to remove pathology and radiology services from the act. More recently, in 2002, it also opposed

Bill 114 in the province of Quebec that threatened to damage the profession and quality patient care.

The association has worked diligently in guiding its members to adapt to changes in the practice of medicine so evident in recent years. Such support received special attention in the early 1990s with the creation of a Consortium on the Future of Pathology/Laboratory Medicine in Canada, aimed at identifying problems in Canadian pathology and their solutions. Sections have also played a role as lobby groups for several subspecialties of pathology and in creating guidelines in areas such as workforce planning, workload standards, quality assurance, and ethical operation of private clinical laboratory practices.

Status of Laboratory Technologists

CAP-ACP has worked to support and elevate the status of laboratory technologists, in co-operation with CMA, the Canadian Hospital Association (CHA), CSMLS, and CSC. The association has supported technologists' training and has been an active participant in the inspection and accreditation of laboratory technology training programs in co-operation with CSMLS. Since the 1960s, CAP-ACP has supported the idea of pathologists' assistants, and in 2006 it set out a position statement that would guarantee adequate training conditions for these professionals. This statement became the basis for creating a new Section of Pathologists' Assistants. Since 1986, it has recognized annually the contribution of CSMLS to the continuing education of its members by a technologist award.

Laboratory Management

CAP-ACP has been a leader in laboratory management, with members of the association participating in successive attempts to develop workload units for pathologists and technologists. The initial ones were based on systems developed in Great Britain and by the College of American Pathologists, with other health care disciplines under the control of the Canadian federal government adopting a similar approach to that of our organization. Unfortunately, in spite of modifications, attempts to apply these units to everyday work were unsuccessful, and it was several years before new systems of evaluation were introduced. In the

1960s and 1970s, CAP-ACP became an active participant in the creation of the Systematized Nomenclature in Pathology (SNOP) and the Systematized Nomenclature for Medical Terminology (SNOMED).

CAP-ACP has been a leader in workforce issues and quality assurance and laboratory safety. Since its very beginning, the association has maintained committees that provide guidelines to address these issues and increased professional awareness by including such topics in annual educational activities. In 2009, the Section of Patient Safety and Quality Assurance was formed to promote education in quality assurance and to develop guidelines related to this field. This section has under its umbrella Canadian Immunohistochemistry Quality Control (ciQc), an immunohistochemistry proficiency-testing program, and the National Standards Committee on High Complexity Laboratory Testing, which has developed immunohistochemistry guidelines and checklists. The organization has also set guidelines for the practice of pathology, such as cytology, retention times for human material and reports, surgical reporting protocols and guidelines, blood donor systems, the importance of autopsies, and consultation between pathologists. It has further advocated for the leadership role of pathologists as laboratory directors.

Continuing Professional Development and Post-graduate Education

Continuing professional development (CPD) in the form of scientific sessions and workshops for its members during annual meetings is one of the main activities of CAP-ACP. These activities are frequently presented in collaboration with sister organizations such as the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemistry (CSCC) and the Canadian Association of Medical Biochemists (CAMB). Scientific sessions were introduced in Vancouver in 1954 and have become progressively more elaborate, with national and international speakers as participants. Workshops introduced in the 1962 annual meeting held in Winnipeg are now among the most important activities of the association, having a similar format to those offered by IAP. In 2008, CAP-ACP also became a Royal College Accredited Provider of CPD and accredits its own and other educational events. CAP-ACP has committed educational support for pathology residents. The Residency Training

Committee began in 1950, and successive committees have worked closely with RCPSC supporting these programs. For instance, the association effectively negotiated the creation of a Fellowship in Pathology. Since 1972, CAP-ACP has provided financial assistance for residents to attend and present at the annual meetings. Such assistance is given in the form of awards honouring distinguished members of the association. The Residents' Section organizes annual meetings where professional issues affecting residents are discussed. In 2011, an annual Residents Review Course was introduced in preparation for the Royal College examination.

CAP-ACP, as an institution and through several of its members, strongly supported the activities of the Canadian Reference Centre for Cancer Pathology (CRCCP). It has also promoted assistance for pathologists in the developing world.

Relation with the Royal College

Throughout the years, CAP-ACP has represented the interests of the pathology community to RCPSC, while maintaining its independence. It has played an advisory role on matters of residency training, clinical pathology, CPD, recertification, and maintenance of competence. In 1952, and again in the early 1970s and 1990s, CAP-ACP advocated that pathology become a separate Division of Laboratory Medicine within the Royal College.

Cytopathology

In 1962, CSC began its activities as an affiliated society. The organization meets annually at the CAP-ACP Annual Meeting and offers a scientific program. In addition it offers advice to the CAP-ACP Executive, CMA, and RCPSC in matters of professional practice and training programs. CSC is also active in developing cytotechnologist training programs across Canada and quality assurance programs in cytopathology.

Research

The objectives of CAP-ACP as stated in the constitution and bylaws extend beyond service and administration. By establishing an annual research award in 1965, the association began to recognize outstanding contributions by its members in basic and clinical research. It plays a role in

promoting and lobbying national organizations for this activity. Indicating its commitment to research in general, the *Canadian Journal of Pathology* was established in 2009.

Humanities

CAP-ACP gives special attention to humanities in pathology. In 1953, the Code of Ethics of the CMA and additional canons were officially adopted. The topic is a frequent theme in internal debates. The association also recognizes the status of women pathologists with equal participation in the executive and sections, and female presidents were appointed in 1985, 1997, 2009, and 2011.

CAP-ACP established a newsletter in 1958 and an Archives Committee in 1975. In 2009, *Canadian Journal of Pathology* replaced the newsletter as the official publication of the association. A seminar called "Humanities in Pathology" initially supported by Associated Medical Services (the Hannah Foundation) is currently held annually, ensuring a commitment to excellence in this field.

The Future

More than 60 years later, the vision of the founders is still alive and carried on by members of the association. In 2011, CAP-ACP, together with other Canadian laboratory physician national specialty societies, became a founding member of CALM in order to collaborate on matters of common interest. The association is also working with RCPSC to form a Canadian Leadership Council on Laboratory Medicine to work on issues such as workload measurement and manpower, national standards in quality assurance, and subspecialty training through the development of Royal College diplomas in the subspecialties of laboratory medicine. A working group on the media and public relations was formed in 2011 to raise the profile of laboratory medicine. These activities make CAP-ACP truly representative of the interests of its members and society in general.

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