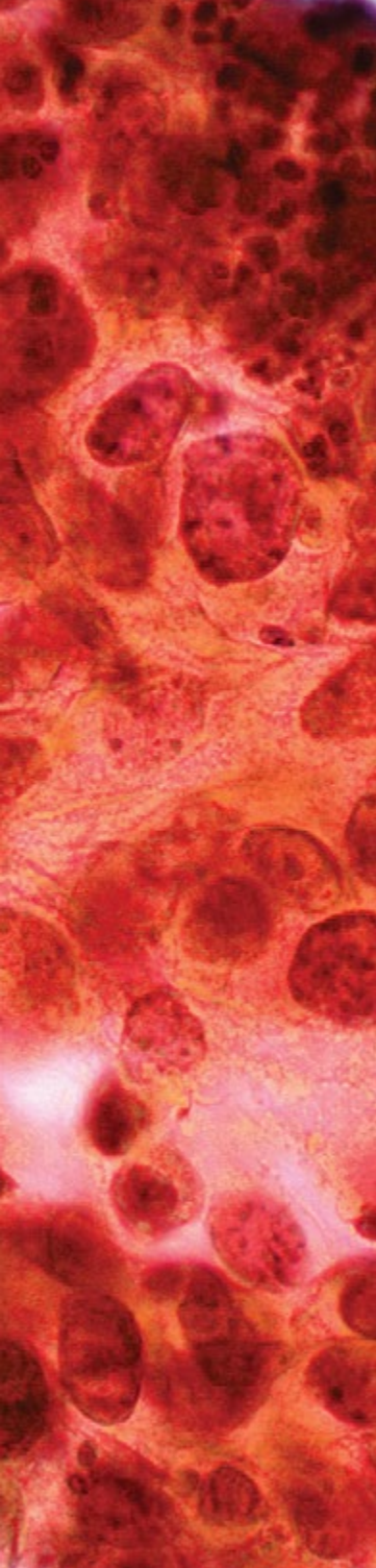




Reducing Variation in Pathology for Optimal, Reliable and Better Outcomes

The role of decision support moves center stage



Reducing Variation for Optimal, Reliable Pathology

The role of decision support moves center stage

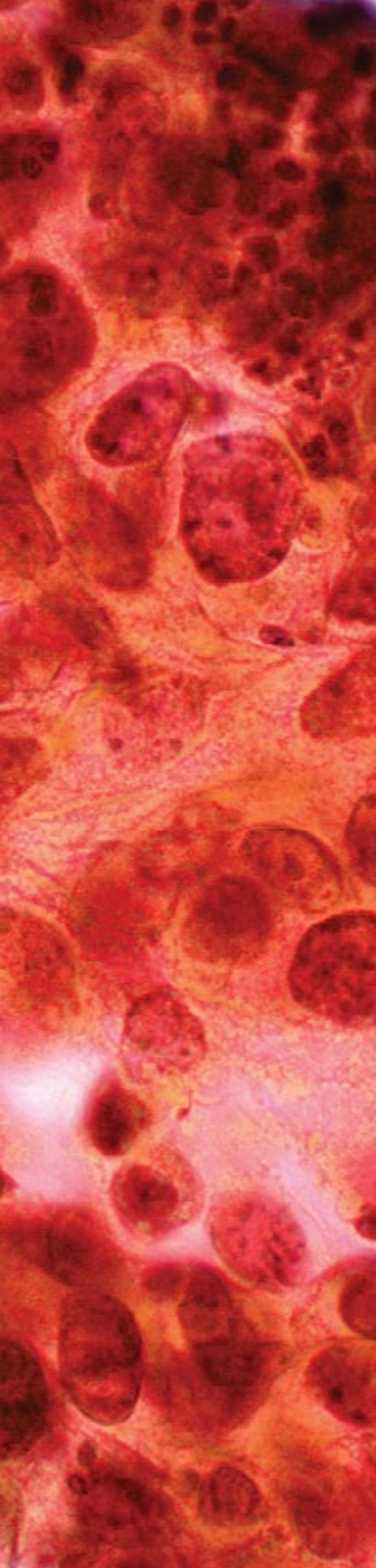
Pathologists wield tremendous power on patient outcomes as the front-line specialists who identify risk of disease, determine diagnoses and guide treatment decisions. As such, pathology is increasingly a focal point of industry efforts to reduce variation and standardize care based on industry best practices.

Pathologists work under great pressure to make the best diagnostic decisions and avoid errors and unnecessary testing. Even so, the value proposition that even marginal improvement presents is worthy of strategic top-down commitment and resource allocation.

In sync with current industry movements, an improved outlook requires infrastructures and workflows that advance uptake of industry best practices. This eBook aims to educate healthcare stakeholders on the increasingly critical role of reference and decision support tools within the pathology space.



70 percent of all medical decisions rely on diagnostic and prognostic information provided by pathologists, making the downstream impact of their choices significant to overall performance.



Pathology: The Opportunity

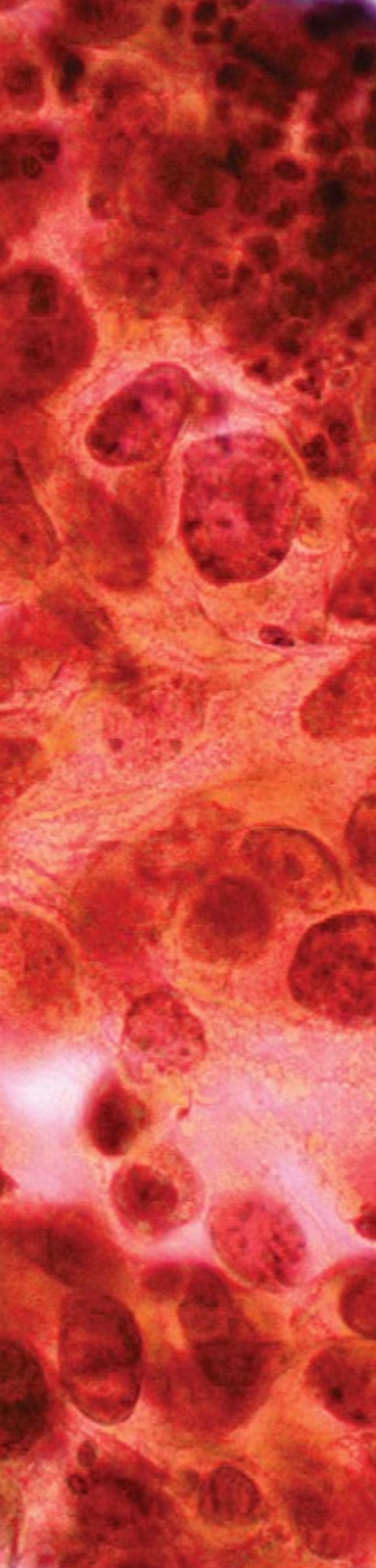
Across the healthcare continuum, pathologists provide the screening, diagnostic and prognostic information that care teams need to devise treatment plans for patients with all types of medical problems—from minor viral conditions to life-threatening conditions such as diabetes and cancer.

The reality of value-based care is that even one error can produce notable consequences to performance metrics and the bottom line. Thus, healthcare organizations are best positioned for optimal outcomes when variations in care are minimized and industry best practices adopted.

Consider, for example, that **60 percent** of general practitioner referrals for pathology relate to preventive health and chronic illness—an essential component to improving population health. Not only do these specialists influence initial decisions around diagnosis and treatment protocols, but they play an important role in ongoing disease management.

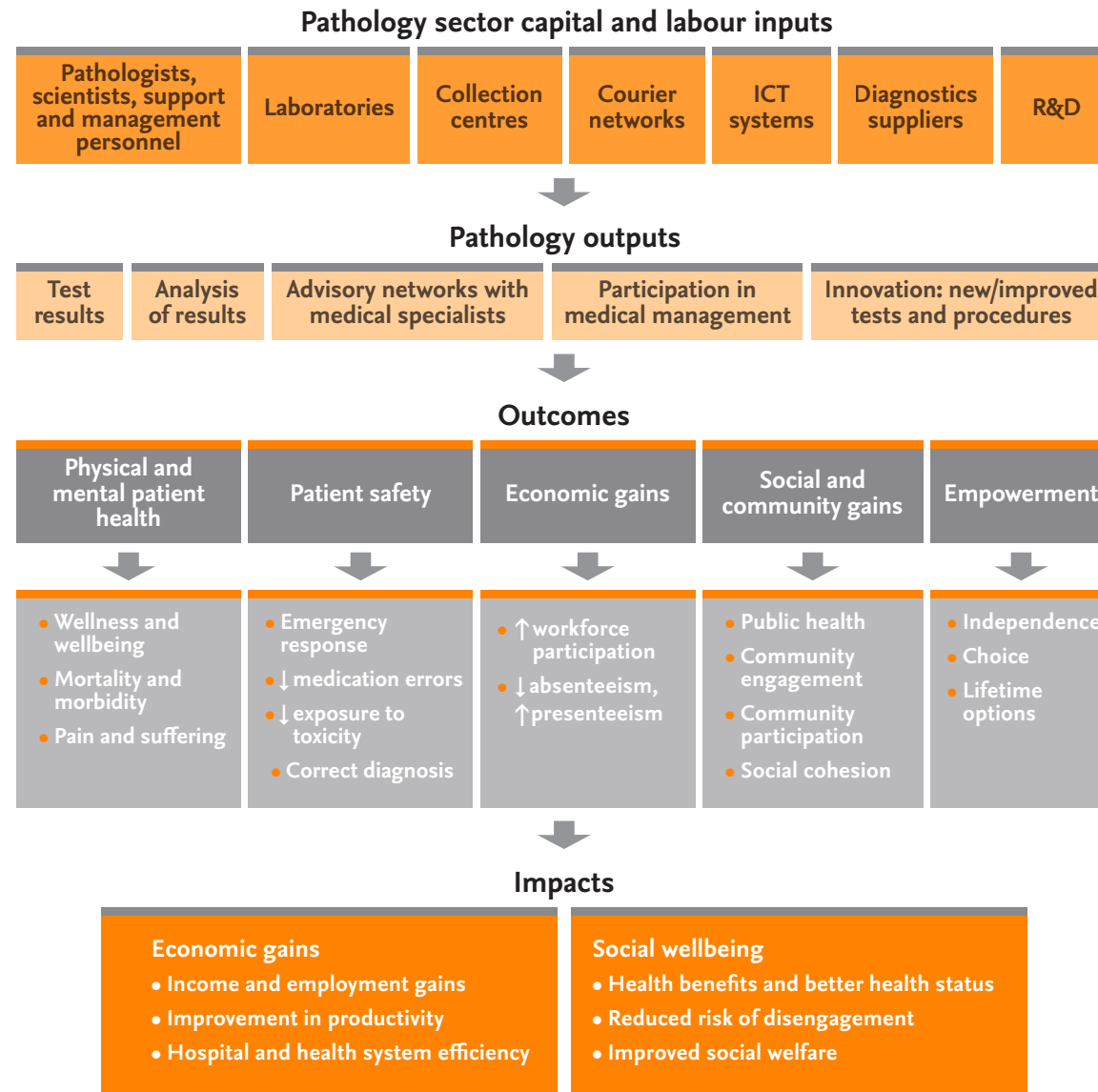


Highly reliable pathology presents sizable performance improvement opportunities to healthcare organizations.



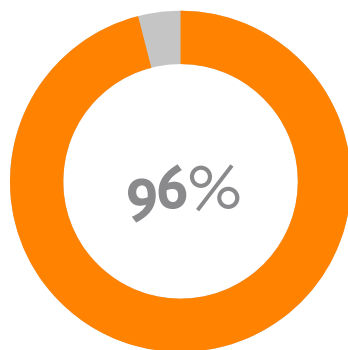
2.1 Impact pathway of pathology on outcomes

The impact of the information uncovered and conclusions rendered by pathologists trickles down into every area of care delivery.

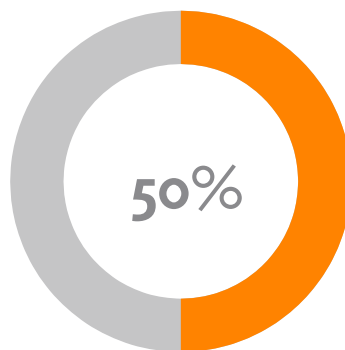


Diagnostic Challenges: By the Numbers

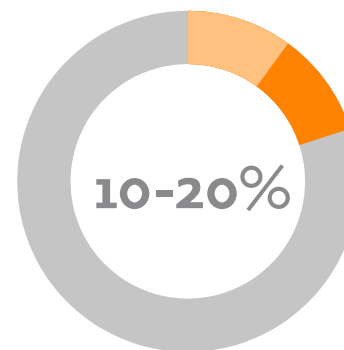
The influence of diagnostic errors on patient experience, cost and quality of care is clear. The opportunity to improve the outlook is even more apparent.



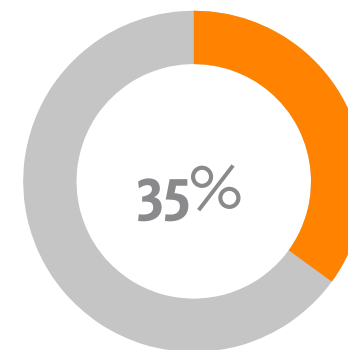
- **96%** of physicians believe that diagnostic errors are preventable, according to a 2011 survey.¹



- **50%** of the more than 6,000 physicians surveyed said they encountered errors at least once a month.²



- **10% - 20%** of patient cases are characterized by delayed, missed or incorrect diagnoses. In fact, most Americans experience a diagnostic error at least once in their lifetime.³



- **35%** of the \$39 billion in malpractice claim payouts from 1986 to 2010 are related to diagnostic errors.⁴

1. Graber ML, Wachter RM, Cassel CK. Bringing Diagnosis Into the Quality and Safety Equations. *JAMA*. 2012;308(12):1211-1212. doi:10.1001/2012.jama.11913
2. Graber ML, Wachter RM, Cassel CK. Bringing Diagnosis Into the Quality and Safety Equations.
3. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2015. *Improving diagnosis in health care*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
4. Landro L. *The Biggest Mistake Doctors Make*. Wall Street Journal. November 17, 2013.

Variation: The Downstream Impact

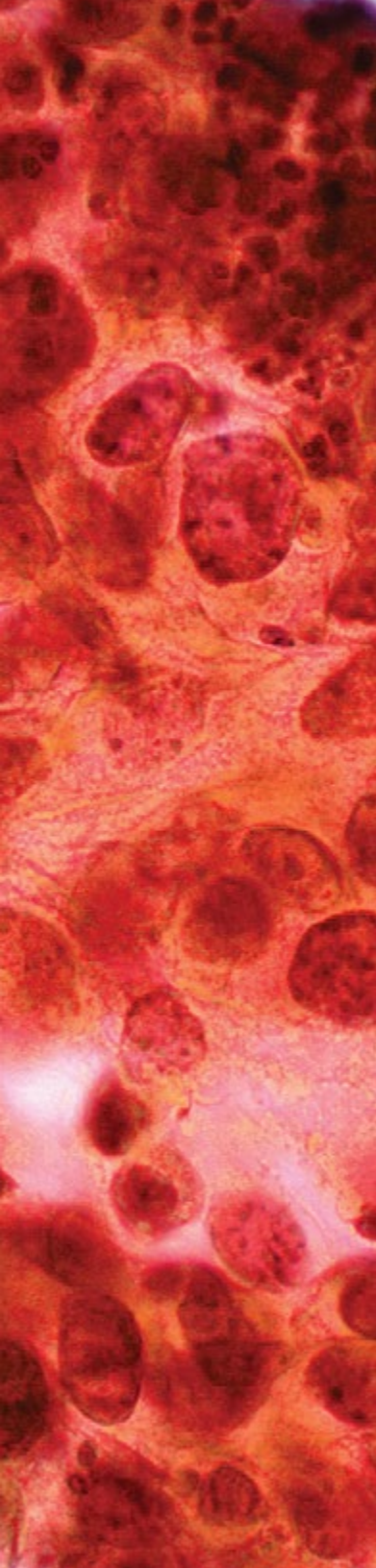


Industry experts agree that standardized, reliable pathology practices can have a dramatic, positive impact on care delivery. The challenge is making it happen.

Increased acquisition activity in the healthcare space complicates efforts as well as expanding adoption of integrated delivery network models. As health systems grow, the challenges associated with standardizing and delivering quality anatomic pathology services across a multitude of facilities and organizations intensifies.

As a result, increasing levels of sub-specialization and care variations in the pathology space lead to a number of challenges:

- **Rising healthcare costs** resulting from increased litigation around misdiagnoses, excessive testing, and expensive unnecessary end-stage treatments.
- **Increased errors in observation and interpretation**, further impaired by use of more generalists to cover specialty cases.
- **Lack of value-added, actionable reporting guidance** as clinicians increasingly look to pathology reports to provide more definitive diagnoses.



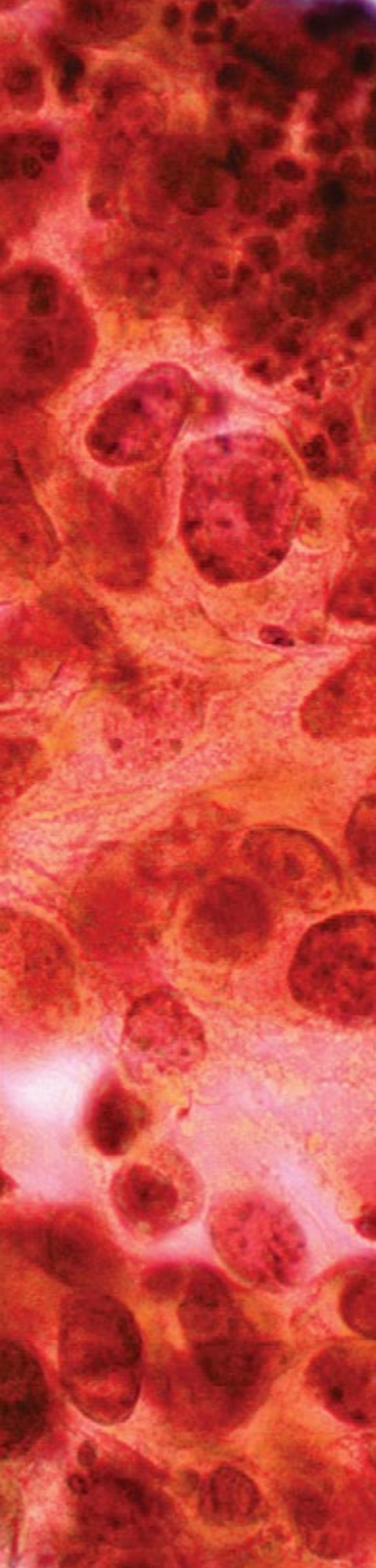
Standardized, Reliable Pathology Practice: The Opportunity

Healthcare reform initiatives are focused on using current, credible industry best practices to support sound clinical care decisions. In fact, this heightened focus on adoption of standardized medicine is a central theme of current legislation shifting the industry from fee-for-service to fee-for-value.

Mounting industry evidence points to the positive impact of using best practice guidelines on patient experience, outcomes and cost. The need for relevant, vetted decision support and reference solutions to support this movement in the pathology space is clearly evident.

Without credible decision support available, pathologists working under tremendous pressure often resort to alternative sources such as unvetted online search content or unvetted online search engines or other unreliable options. These common practices lead to greater variation and further the potential for error and waste.





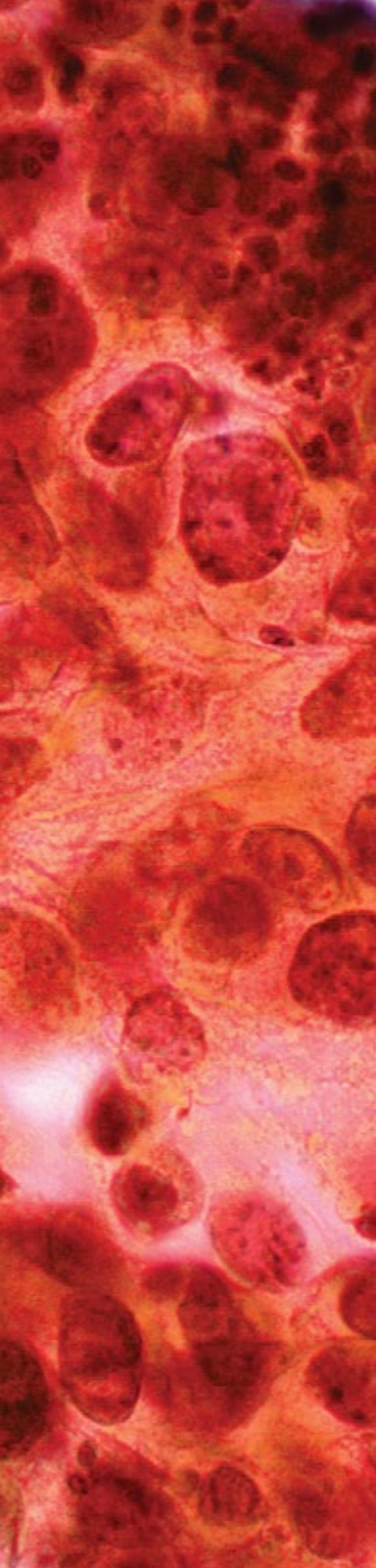
The Good News About Decision Support

Industry solutions exist that can deliver easily accessible, expert-based decision support to:

- help pathologists confidently select appropriate tests
- aid in reaching an accurate diagnosis
- provide relevant prognostic and therapeutic information

When placed appropriately into physician workflows, these tools reduce variation by empowering pathologists to deliver the best clinical decisions, provide patient care recommendations based on the latest industry best practices and lower costs. They can be easily deployed for system-wide use to elevate strategies that reduce variability in quality and cost across an entire health network. Most importantly, pathologists can trust that the content and guidance is current and credible.





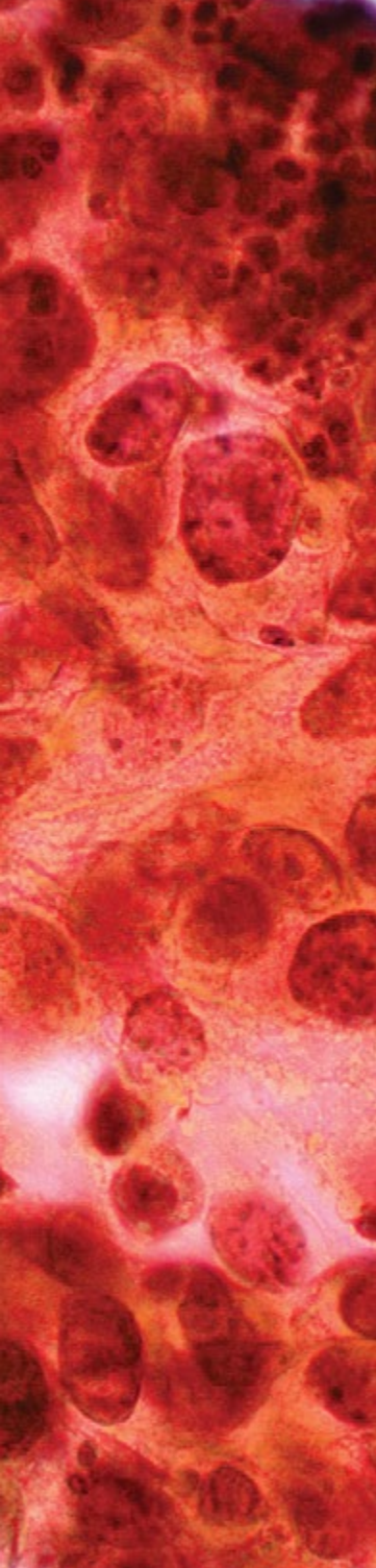
Pathology Decision Support Solutions

ExpertPath is an anatomic and clinical pathology online decision support solution that provides timely aid to today's pathologists in their quest to get every diagnosis right and provide critical information back to physicians and care teams. Click [here](#) to learn how **ExpertPath** is equipping pathologists working under high pressure with the expert-based information needed for:

- diagnosing complex or unusual cases
- examining a case in an unfamiliar specialty area
- teaching students and residents
- preparing for a lecture
- taking part in or preparing for a tumor board

ImmunoQuery is the definitive expert and evidence-based decision support system for immunohistochemistry (IHC). Click [here](#) to learn how **ImmunoQuery** promotes more accurate diagnostic work, while controlling costs associated with ordering expensive antibodies. The solution provides powerful meta-analysis and up-to-date references to:

- aid in their diagnosis of a wide variety of diseases such as cancer, infections, metabolic and connective tissue disorders
- determine the stage and grade of a tumor
- identify where in the body the cancer originated



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- Delivers expert-based decision support to Radiologists and Pathologists