

Number of levels required for diagnosis: An audit & re-audit of endometrial biopsies

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BACKGROUND

- Endometrial biopsies are commonly encountered specimens in routine histopathology practice
- In the UK, different departments follow locally defined protocols for handling endometrial biopsies
- Royal College of Pathologists' guidelines advise that small fragmented and punch biopsies should be sectioned as recommended for the individual site
- Additional levels may be requested depending on the microscopic findings
- Within the Pathology Department at University Hospital Crosshouse, three levels were routinely examined in all endometrial biopsies, a practice that was time, cost and resource demanding

AIM

To assess the necessity of additional histological levels for diagnosis in endometrial biopsies

METHODS

- Endometrial pipelle biopsy, curetting and polyp specimens were included
- Internally reported and outsourced cases were included
- Cycle one: Reporting consultant assessed whether levels two and three were necessary for diagnosis
- Re-audit: A single level was examined and the reporting consultant recorded requests for additional levels and/or immunohistochemistry (IHC)
- Cycle one: 164 randomly selected cases reviewed over 95 days
- Re-audit: 86 randomly selected cases reviewed over 80 days
- To reduce inter-observer variation, three consultants participated in cycle one and five in the re-audit

RESULTS

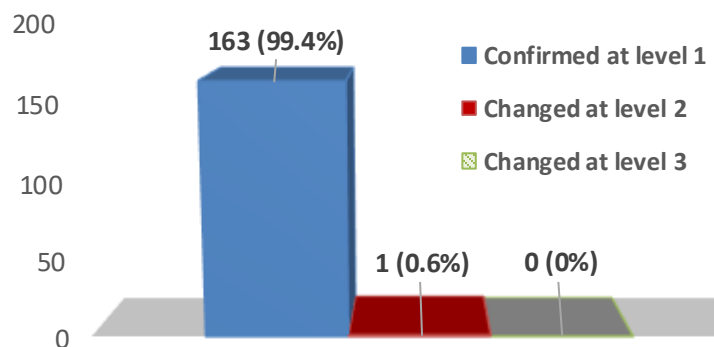
Cycle one: Diagnosis achieved at level one in 163/164 cases (99.4%); one case required level two; no cases required level three

Re-audit: Diagnosis achieved at level one in 85/86 cases (98.8%); one case required additional levels (hyperplasia without atypia); seven cases required IHC (six malignant diagnoses and one inactive endometrium)

CONCLUSIONS

- Single level examination does not compromise diagnostic accuracy
- It is associated with time, resource and cost savings
- Recommend a single H&E-stained full-face section as standard practice for endometrial biopsies

Cycle one: Cases diagnosed at each level



Re-audit: Level 1 diagnosis & need for additional levels or IHC

