

Oral Pathology Biopsy Service Saves Lives

Since the opening of the LSUHSC School of Dentistry in 1969, the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology has provided a biopsy service. Faculty members **Kitrina Cordell, DDS, MS**, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, and **Molly Rosebush, DDS, MS**, assistant professor, continue to offer this invaluable service to dentists in private practice. In 2015, over 2,500 patient cases were submitted to the LSUSD biopsy service.



Oral and maxillofacial pathologists are dentists who focus on diseases of the orofacial region. Their specialized training allows for accurate diagnoses and improved treatment outcomes. Drs. Cordell and Rosebush, along with Ronald Carr, DDS, retired professor of pathology, are the only oral pathologists in Louisiana. Dr. Carr provides consultation services to the departments of pathology at LSU and Tulane Schools of Medicine.

After Hurricane Katrina closed the New Orleans campus of the dental school in 2005, Dr. Robert Brannon kept the biopsy service going from his home on the Northshore. Dr. Craig Brandner, Mandeville oral surgeon, provided office assistance to Dr. Brannon as well as space for his microscope; Dr. Brannon arranged for Northshore Regional Medical Center in Slidell to process the specimens.

Today, for the majority of cases, Drs. Cordell and Rosebush provide a 48-hour turnaround from receipt of the specimen to generation of a final diagnostic report; some cases requiring additional diagnostic procedures may take longer. The service has recently contracted with FedEx to provide prepaid two-day shipping and tracking of specimens from practitioners' offices to the dental school. Upon receipt, biopsy specimens are grossed by the pathologists

and then sent to Delta Pathology in Gretna. The school has contracted with Delta for the production and daily delivery of slides to the dental school. Both Drs. Cordell and Rosebush diagnose cases, alternating as lead pathologist and reviewer.

Dr. Cordell received her DDS and MS in oral and maxillofacial pathology from The Ohio State University. For eight years, until joining LSUSD in 2010, she was on the faculty of the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, where she directed the Oral Pathology Biopsy Service. Dr. Rosebush received her DDS from the University of Michigan and MS in oral and maxillofacial pathology from The Ohio State University. Before joining LSUSD in 2013, she was a faculty member for five years at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. Both Drs. Cordell and Rosebush are diplomates of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology.

In addition to their responsibility for the biopsy service, Drs. Rosebush and Cordell direct oral pathology courses for dental, dental hygiene, and advanced education students and teach continuing education courses. Dr. Cordell sees patients by referral for oral pathologic conditions in the LSUSD Faculty Practice. Both pathologists provide consults in all dental school clinics.

In a recent email to Dr. Cordell, former student Cheryl Campesi Ranlett, RDH, described an experience which illustrates the importance of performing a thorough head and neck examination and identifying abnormal lesions. Cheryl followed up on a suspicious lesion she had spotted in a 31-year old non-smoker/dipper patient; the lesion was biopsied and diagnosed as squamous cell carcinoma. Although a quarter of the patient's tongue was removed, due to early detection, the cancer had not spread into his lymph nodes. Cheryl wrote, "It was such a reality check that oral cancer screenings are such an important part of our job."

Private practitioners who wish to submit a biopsy for diagnosis should contact **Amanda Picou**, administrative assistant, Office of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, at 504-941-8449, or at oralpath@lsuhsc.edu. Amanda will send out biopsy kits with FedEx envelopes, prefilled labels, and instructions for shipping specimens to the dental school.

For further information about the LSUSD Oral Pathology Biopsy Service, contact:

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