The era of scientific pathology at the Charité started in 1831 with establishing a “dissection house”, i.e. the first department of pathology (Prosektur). After the appointment of Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) as professor of Pathological Anatomy at the Charité in 1856, the first institute of pathology in Germany was founded. The Institute of Pathology of the Charité is still situated in the building which had designed according to Virchow’s specifications and was completed in 1906. It now bears the name of its founder, “Rudolf-Virchow-Haus”.

In 1999, the fundamental restoration/reconstruction of the building complex began, in accordance with the requirements of modern surgical and molecular pathology and research. Furthermore, a telepathology Consultation Center was set up, connecting the institute with the global expert network of the UICC (International Union Against Cancer).

Dissection (Prosektur)
The Institute conducts about 750 autopsies per year and fulfills essential functions in:
- patient care with reconstruction of the disease process and determining the cause of death
- final quality control
- student education with daily practical demonstrations
- advanced medical training (education) and epidemiological research.

For more information, e.g. on scientific activities and regarding teaching and training courses, please refer to our home page: [http://pathologie-ccm.charite.de](http://pathologie-ccm.charite.de)

We welcome your feedback and suggestions, please mail to: manfred.dietel@charite.de

Services at the routine diagnosis
The Institute offers the following special services:
- collection and delivery service of specimens and histological findings. (Details on timing and local conditions must be requested individually)
- a permanently staffed telephone information available from 08:00-18:00h at +49-30/450-536 062 or +49-30/450-536 002
- Each pathologist can be reached by e-mail.
- Evaluation of biopsies, usually within 48-hours, expedited service within 24-hours, or even on the same day.
- Furthermore, a 24-hour hour emergency service is set up specifically for transplantation pathology.

The pathology reports generally takes place via automated fax or secure mail system web-mail following data protection regulations.
The diagnoses provide the basis for many clinical decisions. As an example, comprehensive cancer diagnoses can only be set in place by microscopic analyses of tumor tissue. This is also true for many infectious diseases. The routine duties are supplemented by intensive research work, in particular in the field of cancerogenesis, biomarker detection and evaluation, reference pathology in clinical studies, hemato- and gynecology and molecular pathology.

Histology is often the basis of diagnosis and internationally renowned research activities, all clinically relevant fields are covered by organ-orientated specialists. The specific priorities are

- Gynecological and Breast Pathology
- Head, Neck and Oral-Pathology
- Pathology of the Gastrointestinal Tract
- Liver Pathology
- Lymph node and Bone Marrow Pathology
- Uro- and Nephropathology
- Lung Pathology
- Soft Tissue and Joint Pathology
- Cytology
- Neuroendocrine tumor pathology

Special analyses

The conventional diagnoses are often supplemented by specific immunohistochemical and molecular biological methods. In many cases, only the combination of these methods enables the pathologist to define disease entities and to correlate them with functional properties. This applies, in particular, to oncology with regards to histogenesis, prognosis, and drug resistance, and also to pathology of infectious diseases with queries about pathogen detection/classification, e.g. tuberculosis, viruses, fungi etc. For these tasks, a specially trained staff is available.

Quality Assurance – Technology

Fully automated immunohistochemical stainers of the latest generation, approved by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are available to fulfill the requirements for modern tissue-based diagnostics which often directs the therapy, e.g. hormone receptor/HER2 status of breast cancer. The lab participates continuously in round robin tests for quality in assessment performed by QuiP (Quality in Pathology, the official German organization for quality control in pathology).

The molecular pathology lab is certified by the German Society of Pathology as well as the German Cancer Society. The spectrum of analyses is continuously adapted to the up-coming challenges of tissue-based molecular tests, including mutation analyses, array- based tests for micro-organisms etc.

Quality Management – Diagnostics and Documentation

To guarantee highest diagnostic accuracy and to avoid errors, all specimens are evaluated by at least two pathologists – a physician in training and a consultant. Difficult cases are discussed at least two pathologists – a physician in training and a consultant. Difficult cases are discussed in daily diagnosis conferences or forwarded to appropriate centers. All clinical notes and accompanying histological data are electronically stored and can be retrieved at any time. All diagnoses, slides, and paraffin blocks are archived for at least 25 years and are available for subsequent correspondence and special studies.

Surgical specimens are documented digitally during macroscopic preparation in the laboratory. Macroscopic images can be made available upon request.

Guidelines in tumor pathology

Quality and success of clinical oncology depend largely on interdisciplinary interaction. Therefore, international guidelines are the basis for the diagnosis of various tumor types at the Institute of Pathology of the Charité. In addition, obliging SOPs for the macroscopy, on the laboratory scale regeneration and the microscopic findings are available.

The guidelines used are always based on the TNM/UICC system in combination with the WHO classification. Therefore, for each tumor entity, the special work-up recommendations of the respective societies are considered. The high diagnostic standard is also assured by numerous interdisciplinary clinical-pathological conferences. The institute is also a member of the Comprehensive Cancer Center of the Charité.