

Notes to the Report, An Element of Great Importance to understand the Pathological Diagnosis

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Received date: January 14, 2022; **Accepted date:** February 03, 2022; **Published date:** February 14, 2022

Citation: Francisco J T Gómez. (2022). Notes to the report, an Element of great importance to understand the Pathological Diagnosis. *J Clinical Research and Reports*, 10(4); DOI:[10.31579/2690-1919/231](https://doi.org/10.31579/2690-1919/231)

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Summary

Dear Sir,

I would like to propose a game to you. Let's go to a hospital, no matter which one you have chosen. Visit the different services or units. Observe and write down how many and what kind of books populate the libraries of the different specialists. Make a summary and classify the findings in relation to the number of copies and theme. With few exceptions, you will find a very curious fact. Pathologists are the specialists who have the largest number of books and these study on very different disciplines. Many of them will not belong to the specialization of pathology but to different ones, books that they will have observed in other units. Instead, they will be hard-pressed to find pathology books anywhere other than a pathologist's library. It's curious, isn't it?

This is because pathologists make an extra effort to understand the doctrinal content of other specialties in order to interpret the information provided along with the samples that arrive at their laboratories and thus make complete reports. To this end, it is necessary that the specialist who sends the sample, who, after all, is the one who deals directly with the patient, provides the necessary information so that the pathologist can know the data that are essential in the diagnostic process. These data are often non-existent. Thus, the first inconvenience arises in the relationship between two medical professionals responsible for ensuring the health of a patient. Of course, this is not the rule.

When the pathologist manages to make a diagnosis, it is frequent that, unless there is a free flow of information between professionals, doubts arise derived from the interpretation of the information contained in the pathological study report. Many times, this deficiency is due to the use of a different language between colleagues from different specialties.

Regardless of the fact that more and more effort is made to unite clinical and morphological concepts, etc. the different algorithms and the international classifications themselves do not manage to mitigate the problem of the correct interpretation of a pathological report because the problem lies precisely in the lack of knowledge of the terminology. This is a second drawback that can affect the health of the patient. The question then arises: Why don't the different medical specialties have a more complete training in pathology? Or, rather, why is there not a greater interest in knowing the terminology used by pathologists? Therefore, the notes that the pathologist includes in his reports, notes in which he tries to clarify diagnoses, highlight difficulties arising during the diagnostic process, recommendations, prognostic factors ...

These notes are very important. They should not be overlooked in the increasingly frequent transcripts of reports, nor ignored with the report in hand. In them may be the key.

Now that medicine is becoming a science based on numbers with the intention of carrying out statistical analyzes of a different nature, it is more important than ever to value the objective or subjective notes to which I refer. This is not a personal opinion. No. I just put words to a debate that takes place daily between pathologists from the same unit, from different hospitals, from different countries...

Let's get on with the game. Now make the hospital visit again, but this time put a pathology book in the libraries of the professionals of the different specialties. Wait a while. When it comes to an end, come back and ask if you have read those volumes. I assure you, you will be surprised by the answers.

Let each draw their own conclusions...