



King County Medical Examiner's Office

Public Health
Seattle & King County 

King County Medical Examiner's Office FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP

Goals and Objectives

Goal

The ultimate goal of the KCMEO Forensic Pathology Fellowship Training Program is to provide an organized and complex educational environment that will expose the fellow to a large variety of violent and non-violent deaths in order to qualify the fellow for certification in Forensic Pathology by the American Board of Pathology and to prepare the fellow for a successful career as a forensic pathologist.

Objectives

The following objectives help achieve the overall goals of the Forensic Pathology Fellowship. These objectives are organized according to the ACGME core competencies, modified for the specialty practice of Forensic Pathology.

Basic Forensic Pathology Activities / Patient Care

The fellow will demonstrate ability to:

- Develop skills in medicolegal death investigation, technical autopsy skills, documentation, diagnosis, and interpretation
- Understand the role of the medicolegal death investigator in determining and taking jurisdiction of cases, responding to scenes, conducting scene investigations, writing investigative reports, and making family notifications
- Develop specific technical autopsy skills including equipment, safety and hazard control, autopsy procedures, specialized autopsy protocols, photography, radiology, specimen and evidence collection and identification
- Learn the importance of and techniques for accurately documenting the body, postmortem changes, medical therapy, wounds and internal findings, and evidence collection and transfer
- Diagnose and interpret cause of death by performing at least 200 medicolegal autopsies, correctly interpreting postmortem changes, normal anatomic variants, pathologic features of natural diseases, and all types of wounds
- Examine microscopic sections and accurately interpret histological findings
- Interpret toxicology reports and other ancillary procedures integrating the findings into the pathologic diagnoses
- Generate accurate autopsy reports and death certificates



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Knowledge in Forensic Medicine and Pathology, Criminalistics, Toxicology and Forensic Anthropology / Medical Knowledge

The fellow demonstrates:

- Understanding of basic pathology and forensic pathology principles in daily rounds, meetings, and weekly forensic conferences
- Understanding of criminalistics and forensic toxicology procedures and testing through the Washington State Patrol Forensic Laboratory
- Practical experience in forensic anthropology and odontology by working up several skeletal cases and participating in dental identifications

Practice-Based Learning

The fellow demonstrates:

- Knowledge of relevant material in order to correctly interpret pathological findings and formulate coherent diagnoses and conclusions
- Ability to prepare and deliver formal presentations in weekly KCMEO forensic conferences
- Ability to review, discuss and analyze current forensic pathology literature during a monthly journal club
- Identify quality assurance and improvement needs during quarterly meetings

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

The fellow demonstrates:

- Ability to write clear and concise reports explaining medical and scientific information to individuals with limited scientific education and medical background
- Development of verbal communication skills through formal presentations
- Ability to respond without preparation in front of a diverse audience to prepare for courtroom testimony
- Ability to communicate effectively with families, police, attorneys, and prosecutors
- Ability to develop written communication skills by describing external wounds, internal injuries and pathological conditions in a clear and concise manner
- Ability to assemble a set of pathological diagnoses summarizing the major findings along with an opinion stating how the findings support the cause and manner of death



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Professionalism

The fellow demonstrates:

- A high degree of professionalism when encountering families and representatives from outside agencies
- Ability to treat investigative, technical and administrative support staff with dignity and respect
- Understanding of appropriate role for humor in dealing with psychological burden of the medical examiner profession
- Ability to death with families in a compassionate manner, responding gently to families and refraining from emotional responses
- Ability to develop cultural sensitivity and competence in an extraordinarily diverse population of Seattle and King County
- Ability to respond in a timely fashion

Systems-Based Practice

The fellow demonstrates:

- Understanding of the unique role of a forensic pathologist in the public safety, criminal justice, health care, and public health systems
- Ability to interpret and observe privacy laws and HIPAA guidelines
- Understanding of electronic data management system
- Understanding of the role of KCMEO in a Mass Fatality Incident