1.2 Quality Assurance in Forensic Pathology: Protecting the Criminal Justice System
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Learning Objectives

At the end of the presentations, participants will be able to

1. Define quality assurance (QA).
2. Explain the rationale for QA in forensic pathology.
3. Recall the ideal QA measures which can be employed in forensic pathology.
4. Cite notable examples of miscarriages of justice that have occurred when QA measures in forensic pathology were not employed.

Abstract
Errors in forensic pathology have resulted in miscarriages of justice and erode public confidence in the Criminal Justice System when they occur. No system or person is infallible and errors will occur but forensic pathologists should operate in systems in which there are Quality Assurance (QA) measures in place aimed at significantly reducing the risks for error thereby lowering the potential for miscarriages of justice. The forensic pathology jurisdictions of England and Wales and the province of Ontario, Canada (Ontario Forensic Pathology Service) have well established quality assurance measures in place which are aimed at protecting the criminal justice system but this approach is not reflected internationally. Not all jurisdictions employ some form of QA in the practice of forensic pathology for a variety of reasons but the need for having QA in forensic pathology has been gaining prominence as a result of errors in forensic pathology which have resulted in miscarriages of justice.

This paper will provide a synopsis the QA measures in place in the jurisdictions of England and Wales and the province of Ontario and will attempt to identify the ideal components of quality assurance in forensic pathology from two main perspectives of (i) managerial oversight of a forensic pathology service and (ii) characteristics of its individual practitioners. Some notable examples of serious errors in forensic pathology will be referenced as examples of what can go wrong.