
How Efficiency Gains in the Pathology Department may Impact the Breast Cancer Care Continuum



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Thanks to early detection through routine breast screening as well as effective and efficient treatment, breast cancer patient survival rates have been increasing since 1989, especially for women under 50.¹ However, today Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women, accounting for one in four annual cancer cases worldwide and kills more European women than any other cancer.² In Europe alone, an estimated 576,300 women were diagnosed with the disease in 2020.³

Breast cancer diagnosis and care is a team effort that relies upon a number of different professionals including radiologists, breast surgeons, pathologists and oncologists. Although the patient may never meet them, the pathologist is a critical member of these multidisciplinary teams.

Pathologists play a critical role in a breast cancer patient's care pathway, turning detection into diagnosis and ensuring effective treatment can begin promptly. Once a breast abnormality is identified through a mammogram, a biopsy is performed and the samples are sent to the laboratory for testing followed by review and assessment by the pathologist. Here, surgeons and oncologists as well as patients rely upon the pathologist to examine the tissue to determine if the abnormality is cancer and, if so, the type and grade of it. Based on the diagnosis, clinical care decisions are made, ensuring appropriate and effective treatment for the patient.

Innovations such as Hologic's Faxitron® Path+ Specimen Radiography System are optimised for today's healthcare environment, as the system combines exceptional versatility and image quality with intuitive, easy-to-use software. By providing immediate access to high-resolution imaging, the Faxitron Path+ system allows pathologists to easily locate areas of interest and potentially reduce the turnaround time from specimen submission to pathology report generation.

When a pathology lab has access to a dedicated system such as Faxitron Path+, pathologists and radiologists can operate simultaneously and avoid workflow disruptions that can be caused by having to share x-ray equipment. As a result, both departments can operate efficiently, ultimately enhancing patient care.

The benefits of a more rapid workflow are twofold. Firstly, from a patient perspective, rapid diagnosis is not only emotionally and physically less stressful, but also facilitates earlier treatment of their cancer.

Secondly, from a healthcare facility perspective, streamlining workflow is essential to ensuring they can provide patients with optimal care in a

timely manner. The delays to cancer screenings and treatments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have only further heightened the importance of maximizing efficiency, as these disruptions threaten to exacerbate the severe impact diseases such as breast cancer already have on women across Europe.

Understanding the important role played by pathologists as part of the breast cancer care team is vital in building efficiency along the clinical pathway of the breast care continuum. Ensuring they can do their work with accuracy and efficiency by equipping them with the necessary tools like the Faxitron® Path+ system is essential, as their work has significant wide-ranging implications for treatment decisions and, ultimately, patient outcomes.

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