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Associazione Italiana di Patologia Veterinaria

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Clinical pathology is beginning to play an increasingly more important role as veterinary diagnosis and therapy become more centered on evidence-based medicine methods. Laboratory medicine provides an important part of the information that is used for these analytical approaches to medicine. It has an unique role as an essential bridge between the practitioner of veterinary medicine and the practitioners of laboratory science and morbid /anatomical pathology. As veterinary medicine evolves and becomes more sophisticated and the demands for different levels of care and services expand along with the expansion and applications of biotechnology in the laboratory the need for a discipline /specialty which can interrelate and act as a catalyst between these areas increases. Clinical pathology is ideally placed to play this central role.

Clinical pathology /Laboratory medicine has evolved and expanded from isolated disciplines of haematology, clinical biochemistry, cytology, immunology, and embraced other areas like laboratory management and quality assurance and control. Perhaps most importantly the synthesis and interpretation of data from many areas of laboratory medicine in relation to the disease process is a key function of the clinical pathology specialist.

In practical terms, clinical pathology with its associated” omics” proteomics metabolomics to name a few, can provide rapid ante-mortem information to both the clinician and to the study
director scientist in research and pharmaceutical clinical trials situations. It is complementary to classical pathology in that cytology can be a valuable rapid precursor or alternative to histopathology in many clinical situations. Ante-mortem laboratory medicine information can add an extra dimension to the understanding of early pathophysiological mechanisms leading to the final pathological basis of changes found in many clinical and experimental situations.

With the rapid advancements in biotechnology and computer and information technology the ability to perform laboratory tests with sophisticated, but simple to use equipment in any veterinary practice is expanding rapidly. This development has seen the role of the clinical pathologist change. Now there is a greater need for the specialist to take on the role of educator and advisor to his/her clinician colleagues. One good way to do this is through regular continuing education short courses. In these the practicing veterinarian can gain understanding and insight into the best way to adapt and use such equipment to serve his /her diagnostic needs. There are often numerous disadvantages to the isolated small in practice laboratory. Not least of these is the maintenance of the assurance of the generation of good quality results and correct interpretation of those obtained. Also in this way veterinarians become aware of new developments and the specialist abilities of clinical pathologists in areas like cytology and endocrinology and immunology testing and interpretation to mention a few.