Acupath Announces Breakthrough Test in Cancer Screening and Validation Approval by the New York State Department of Health

Dermatopathologist Dr. George Hollenberg discusses new FISH probe for highly accurate differentiation of benign Spitz nevus from malignant skin lesions.

Plainview, NY (PRWEB) June 26, 2012 -- Acupath Laboratories, Inc., an anatomic pathology and cancer genetics laboratory, has announced their validation approval by the New York State Department of Health of AcuProbe™ Spitz, a new test that enables a more objective, accurate method of establishing the diagnosis of Spitz nevus, a benign mole that closely mimics malignant melanoma in conventional histological tests. This new test is based on fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH), a technique that detects and localizes the presence or absence of specific DNA sequences on chromosomes.

“Spitz nevus can affect people of any age but is most often seen in children and young adults,” says Dr. George Hollenberg, founding director of Acupath. Since it was first described by Dr. Sophie Spitz in 1948, it has been difficult to distinguish Spitz nevus from melanoma by microscopic examination alone.

“In many cases, differentiating between benign lesions and malignant melanoma can be done with conventional immunohistochemical (IHC) studies,” Dr. Hollenberg explains. “That means we stain the tissue sample and examine it microscopically to identify the presence of specific proteins. However, a significant number of cases fall into a borderline category, in which the findings are ambiguous and the diagnosis is subjective. This is especially true of Spitz nevus, which looks very much like melanoma under the microscope.”

The FISH technique provides more accurate and objective results because FISH markers are able to detect the presence or absence of specific DNA sequences on chromosomes in individual cells by using fluorescent probes that only target the genes of interest. When FISH is used to identify a Spitz nevus, the FISH probes target the gene HRAS which recent publications have shown may be amplified in patients with Spitz nevus but not in patients with melanoma.

The test enables pathologists to determine with certainty that the Spitz nevus cells have the presence of the gene HRAS and when used in conjunction with histology allows them to provide physicians with an objective and accurate diagnosis.

“AcuProbe™ Spitz is a useful tool for distinguishing Spitz nevus from malignant melanomas, Dr. Hollenberg concludes. “It provides valuable genetic information previously unavailable to the dermatopathology community.

The AcuProbe™ Spitz FISH Panel is now available at Acupath Laboratories, Inc. and can be ordered on any current or previously submitted formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissue. The turnaround time is approximately 3-5 days. For information on how to order this test, call 1-877-PATHLAB (728-4522).

Acupath Laboratories, Inc. located in Plainview, New York, is an anatomic pathology and cancer genetics laboratory. Acupath's mission is to deliver fast, accurate anatomic pathology, FISH, ISH, flow cytometry, molecular and cytogenetic analysis in a way that enhances the quality of medical care provided by practitioners while minimizing the risk of error. The research and development team continuously innovates, designing up to date methodologies for testing and new ways for doctors to access, exchange, record and analyze medical data.
information. Acupath is committed to improving efficiencies of practice, superior service and greater patient knowledge and satisfaction. Acupath is accredited by the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Joint Commission, and certified by the New York State Department of Health (DOH). www.acupath.com.

Dr. George Hollenberg, founding director of Acupath Laboratories, Inc., supervises the analysis of thousands of biopsies each year, utilizing the cutting-edge technology in histology and immunocytochemistry, as well as the latest advances in computerized report preparation. He is a veteran in the fields of pathology and dermatopathology, with expertise in the areas of dysplastic nevi, melanoma and other forms of cancer. Board-certified in dermatopathology, and clinical and anatomic pathology, Dr. Hollenberg has held visiting fellowships in dermatopathology at New York University Medical Center and Jefferson University Medical Center. After receiving his medical degree from New York Medical College, he completed his residency in clinical pathology at Cornell University Medical Center and in anatomic pathology at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center. Dr. Hollenberg is currently a consultant in dermatopathology for North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset and an assistant professor in dermatology at Stony Brook University Medical Center. Often contacted by editors for his expertise, Dr. Hollenberg has written dozens of medical articles and has had his work published in various medical journals and publications.
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