

American Society for Cytotechnology Guidelines for the Ethical Practice of Cytotechnology

The foundation of ethics is associated with honesty, justice, and courtesy forming a moral philosophy among people with mutual interest. Cytotechnologists, as professional healthcare providers shall practice their profession according to this code of ethics.

1. The cytotechnologist understands that the responsibility for the welfare of the patient supersedes responsibility to all others. The cytotechnologist acting in a professional manner shall:

- Exercise ethical judgment in decision-making processes, accept the responsibility for the consequences of these decisions and be able to acknowledge personal error.
- Abide by the rules and regulations of the laboratory or institution.

2. The cytotechnologist screens and interprets cytologic samples according to the legislative and regulatory guidelines. Under the technical supervision of a qualified pathologist, the cytotechnologist shall:

Verify the patient and specimen identification. Evaluate the specimen quality, thoroughly examine microscopically and render a final cytologic interpretation using recognized Cytopathologic terminology for gynecologic cell samples as allowed by regulations.

- Examine microscopically and render a preliminary interpretation on gynecologic samples requiring pathologist review and on all non-gynecologic samples.
- Consider the clinical data of the patient, comparing these data with the microscopic findings and assist the pathologist in formulating a final report.

3. The cytotechnologist uses principles of specimen collection, cytopreparation and laboratory safety in order to maintain an effective laboratory operation. The cytotechnologist shall:

- Ensure patient safety through correctly labeled specimens.
- Be knowledgeable and competent in the principles, techniques and instrumentation of cytopreparation.
- Assume responsibility for the identification and resolution of problems.
- Maintain a safe environment for persons in the laboratory.
- Be able to perform or to direct the performance of laboratory procedures according to the priorities of efficient patient care.

4. The cytotechnologist possesses professional credentials by maintaining certification by a recognized agency and participating in proficiency testing and self-assessment programs when available.

5. The cytotechnologist adheres to current established quality control guidelines in all phases of laboratory operation. The cytotechnologist should:

- Maintain orderly, accurate daily screening workload records as required by CLIA
- Not willingly assent to employment where the workload standards are violated or where other factors do not permit adequate evaluation of specimens.

6. The cytotechnologist is familiar with the organizational principles of a Cytopathology laboratory and a Cytopathology laboratory information system. The cytotechnologist shall:

- Have a basic understanding of laboratory personnel structure, operating within a budget, and the interaction of the Cytopathology laboratory with other medical personnel.
- Have a basic knowledge of data collection and retrieval systems necessary to ensure efficient, accurate reporting of laboratory results.

7. The cytotechnologist establishes cooperative and respectful working relationships with pathologists, other physicians, and health professionals in providing effective health care for the patient. The cytotechnologist shall:

- Effectively convey information to those professionals directly responsible for patient care so that they understand how to request specific examinations, know when to expect appropriate results, and understand the reason for any request for additional clinical data or repeat sampling.
- Abide by HIPAA policy and maintain patient confidentiality, respecting all Protected Health Information (PHI)
- Recognize and respect the role of both the patient's physician and the laboratory director in the diagnostic interpretation of laboratory data and treatment of the patient.

8. The cytotechnologist maintains competency and high standards of practice and knowledge. The cytotechnologist shall:

- Participate in continuing education programs in Cytopathology
- Support professional organizations through membership and attendance at local, regional, national or international meetings
- Make every effort to uphold, maintain and improve the professional integrity and practice of cytotechnology

9. The cytotechnologist contributes to the advancement of the profession. The cytotechnologist shall:

- Strive to expand the body of knowledge
- Adopt new technologies that benefit patient care
- Maintain integrity and high standards in research, practice & education

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