Background

The Institute of Pathology Saarbrücken-Rastpfuhl was founded in 1990 as a private institute and examines about 44,000 histologic and 12,000 cytologic samples per year. The institute is owned by three pathologists, Dr. Bert Bier, PD Dr. Elke Eltze and Kai Schmitt, and has two additional senior pathologists and 26 technical employees on staff.

Saarbrücken is the capital of the Federal State Saarland which is situated in the southwest of Germany bordering France and Luxembourg, with landmarks like the World Cultural Heritage "Völklinger Hütte" and the natural monument "Saarschleife."

After the institute added Dako Omnis to their laboratory, they were interviewed to hear more about their impressions and experiences with their new solution. The following are excerpts from this interview, conducted with pathologists and lab owners Dr. Bert Bier and Kai Schmitt, and lab technicians Ellen Warschburger, Sarah Scherf and Birgit Fess.

"Dako Omnis fits wonderfully into our daily routine."

- Institute of Pathology, Saarbrücken-Rastpfuhl, Germany
Faster delivery of patient cases

We’re getting slides continuously throughout the day, and sometimes in the same day if requested in the morning. Before Dako Omnis, we never got the slides until the next day and all of the cases were delivered together.

It is great that we can now deliver a diagnosis earlier. Especially for later stages of small-cell lung cancer, it is possible to start therapy a day earlier or even sometimes several days in the case of a weekend, because this cancer type otherwise proliferates very quickly. Also, the continuous delivery gives us more freedom to prioritize cases where fast therapy is vital for the patient.

The biggest advantage is on Thursdays, because we now can have the additional slides ready for assessment not later than Friday. In the past, we - and the patient - had to wait the whole weekend until Monday.

Consistent quality

The full automation and foolproof operation make a big difference together with the RTU reagents and protocols. Because it is a closed system with no manual interaction and full control of temperature and humidity, the processes are standardized.

We now definitely notice that fluctuations in the staining quality are eliminated. Before we could see differences even related to the seasons and direct sunlight.

Improved workflow

Dako Omnis fits wonderfully into our daily routine. Now we can do night runs and we can even start runs before the weekend and have the stained slides ready on Monday morning – an invaluable advantage.

Our turnaround time has really improved. Right now IHC requests are continuously cut whereas previously they were prepared in batches. Everything we load on Dako Omnis before noon is ready for the pathologists before 3 p.m. We continue to cut until 3 o’clock, and these slides run on Dako Omnis overnight so they are ready the next morning. Before Dako Omnis, we would need to wait till the next morning to set up an IHC run, so the patient cases would not be delivered to the pathologists before the afternoon of the next day.

We are preparing IHC continuously, so the pathologists get the slides throughout the day. We are also able to run urgent cases faster – these now take only about two and a half hours.

We run 21,000 IHC slides per year, and with just one Dako Omnis we are able to run all the incoming slides in the same day – sometimes 135 slides per day.

Figure 1. Ellen Warschburger, Sarah Scherf and Lab Manager Birgit Fess (from left to right) operating Dako Omnis.
Easy and safe operation

We save a lot of time on the handling. We simply print the slide labels, load the slides and then start a run. With Dako Omnis, we are able to do the reagent preparation while the instrument is running. No matter whether we select a protocol, change an antibody or load more slides, Dako Omnis continues undisturbed with the current runs. That is very important.

Dako Omnis is very easy to operate – it has a lot of security measures that prevent mistakes while, for example, inserting a bulk fluid container or loading reagents and slides. With a little bit of computer experience, anyone can learn to operate Dako Omnis very quickly.

With the Dako Omnis RTU antibodies it is very easy to use a new antibody because the protocol is already optimized for Dako Omnis. We only need a few slides for validation. We appreciate the fact that the antibodies are refrigerated because this helps to secure our material and is of great value when doing night runs, especially during hot summer weather.

Summary


“For us, Dako Omnis means more work done – faster, safer and with no stress. We easily save a day or two in each case, and over the weekend we save three or four days.”
Fig 3. Immunohistochemical stain (Melan A) highlighting the epidermal and dermal component of an acral nevus.

Fig 4. Immunohistochemical stain (GATA-3) highlighting nests of urothelial carcinoma in the wall of the left ureter.