

## Heidelberg Pathology Meeting

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The 2<sup>nd</sup> ITMIG pathology workshop took place at the University of Heidelberg Pathology Institute in Mannheim, Germany on December 2-4, 2011. This brought together an international panel of thymic malignancy experts from Europe, North America and Asia. Although a few renown experts were unable to attend, the willingness of most, who managed to make time was another demonstration of the commitment that has come to characterize ITMIG meetings. All of the participants invested a lot of preliminary work beforehand, selecting slides for discussion from their collections. The unanimous assessment at the end of the weekend was that the event was a great success.

The meeting was organized by Alex Marx and Philipp Ströbel, who put in a lot of effort before the event to maximize what could be accomplished. They cataloged all of the submitted cases, and



organized them so that particular issues could be focused on by collectively discussing the relevant cases that had been assembled. They also developed, by email exchange with those coming, draft documents to serve as a starting off point for further discussion. They were busy during the meeting, multitasking by managing all the logistic arrangements, participating in the discussion, keeping detailed notes of the points made, and editing in real time the draft documents that had been prepared.

This first day focused on lymphocyte poor thymomas and the second on lymphocyte rich thymomas. Particular issues that were addressed were boundaries between A and AB, differences between the B component of AB thymomas and the B spectrum of thymomas, boundaries between the B subgroups and also between B and C. Another theme running through the meeting was the degree to which a grade of more malignant features was exhibited by thymomas, and how to integrate these observations with other observations about morphologic features. The entire time was marked by a lot of critical, constructive and collaborative thinking. People came with sometimes similar and sometimes different viewpoints, and there was a willingness to be outspoken about conflicting data, but then discuss it constructively to see how we can address the discrepancies. Some novel viewpoints and ways of thinking about thymic morphology were explored.

An equal amount of follow-up work is now underway. The goal of the meeting was to propose a clearer wording of “typical” types of thymomas, and a way to address mixed tumors and difficult to classify cases. This should help reduce variability in classification. Furthermore, articulation of the problem areas should help focus further research to improve the system as we pull together our forces within ITMIG. These things will be summarized in a paper to be published. Preliminary plans were discussed for research studies (e.g. testing of the proposed system, testing of new immunohistochemistry markers) and infrastructure development (e.g. creation of a detailed thymic pathology database and consensus classification of a collection of cases).



In summary, the 2<sup>nd</sup> ITMIG pathology meeting involved a lot of work, and represents a lot of progress through stimulating collaborative debate and discussion. This sort of progress would not have been possible without the creation of ITMIG, and the enthusiasm and commitment of ITMIG members as a whole.