

5.10 Is there still a role for bronchial washings and brushings in the diagnosis of lung cancer?

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Background: Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer mortality in Ireland¹. With the advent of targeted cancer therapies, bronchoscopists must ensure they obtain sufficient tumour cells for histological analysis for accurate molecular testing. Bronchial washings (BW), bronchial brushings (BB), endobronchial biopsy (EBx), transbronchial biopsy (TBx) and lymph node sampling (TBNA) can all be obtained during a single procedure. **Aims:** The primary aim of this study was to assess the accuracy of BW and BB alone to complete lung cancer diagnosis. **Methods:** We undertook a retrospective review of all new patients seen in the lung cancer clinic over a consecutive 12 month period. A 'complete diagnosis' was defined as patients who had full molecular subtyping available from BB and BW alone. **Results:** 66% of patients (n=41) who had a diagnosis of lung cancer made from bronchoscopy did not have visible endobronchial tumour or mucosal abnormalities. All of these patients had BB and BW taken at bronchoscopy. A complete diagnosis was achieved from BB and BW alone in only 4% of patients (n=2). **Conclusion:** BB and BW can assist in diagnosing lung cancer. With the advent of molecular therapy, they alone are rarely enough to obtain a complete diagnosis for patients. **Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.