The average pathologist spends several hours on each case. While the amount of time a pathologist spends does vary based on complexity of cases, it is prudent to note that some of this time cannot be avoided; it highlights a clear need for effective pathologist-focused tools that can simplify complex workflows.

From correlation and interpretation to analysis, pathologists’ workflow is very complex and there remains significant opportunity to streamline their routine case checklist and ensure a high-quality outcome. Clinical pathology results, anatomical pathology results, patient historical information and EMR records can all help inform pathologists' analysis and enable an accurate diagnosis. Pathologists work by mental checklists within their set routines and need a streamlined routine for their case activities. Every second a pathologist is focused on finding patient information is a second taken away from giving an accurate diagnosis.

Most pathologists do not have a single access point to all necessary clinical information for an holistic analysis. To access all the information they need, many must log in to multiple software systems or manually collect and sort through paper reports. This reality creates a risk of a delayed diagnosis which, in turn, can increase patient length of stay. In addition, in a worst-case scenario, this delay can increase mortality rate in sepsis cases or other high-risk cases, or, in a best-case scenario, negatively impact patient satisfaction and increase the overall cost of care. In the UK alone, sepsis costs the NHS £2.5 billion and takes over 37,000 lives per year. Any efforts that can reduce that number should be seriously taken into consideration.

Often, pathologists find the burden of multiple logins and difficult-to-access
Sunquest Vue offers pathologists a comprehensive and holistic patient view in order to make accurate, efficient patient diagnoses.

records too great and base the final results on incomplete data sets. Without the ability to correlate clinical to anatomical pathology results, specialised test results, and surgical or historical patient data, pathologists must take a leap of faith, make assumptions and risk misdiagnosis. Beyond efficiency concerns, this increases the risk of misdiagnosis, the wrong treatment plan and negative patient care outcomes.

**Technology**

This type of complex, high-risk workflow is ripe for technology innovation; however, little options today exist that solve this issue. It would be remiss to say that technology surrounding pathology is not advancing, it just is not advancing in all the areas that it should. Many of the latest innovations are focused on digital pathology to improve collaboration between pathologists, effectively allowing for specialised experience that was not previously available to be leveraged, and this market is seeing significant growth. A recent study by Frost & Sullivan estimates the European digital pathology market to expand at an annual growth rate of 12.7%, while the United States digital pathology market is expected to see an annual growth rate of 17%.

Information integration has been a focus of information system vendors for some time. Many organisations are looking to enterprise electronic health record vendors to solve information integration needs with a single hospital-wide solution. Unfortunately, these systems do little to address the needs of pathologists. While laboratory orders and results can be easily passed between departments, enterprise vendors have not focused on making the end-user functionality more robust or on the ability for trending results across laboratory specialty areas. According to the Mayo Clinic, the laboratory affects 70% of all patient diagnoses. If the laboratory is responsible for so much information, why don’t pathologists have the proper tools at their disposal?

**Innovation for streamlined workflow**

Sunquest Information Systems sought to address the needs of the pathologist in a streamlined, elegant way. With the recent release of a new solution, Sunquest Vue, pathologists can have a comprehensive and holistic patient view to make accurate, efficient patient diagnoses and produce the most integrated and comprehensive patient report. The customisable user interface allows pathologists to determine how much or how little information they see. In a single view, pathologists can review clinical results, pathology records, images, documents, EHR data, staff contact information associated with patient cases, email and other sources of information that they need to make decisions about their case.

With this solution, pathologists can shave minutes of time off each case, improve efficiencies in workload management, increase case load capacity, and save the hospital thousands of pounds each year. Questions such as ‘Did the patient suffer from a disease in the past that could affect the diagnosis?’ can be answered confidently as barriers that hinder the ability to give an accurate and timely diagnosis are eliminated.

With laboratory results playing a key role in an estimated 70% of clinical decisions, a focus on effective clinical tools designed for the pathologist is a must for any organisation striving to maintain efficiency and optimise patient care outcomes. With a mission for making healthcare smarter and patients safer, Sunquest is delivering tools that can make a significant, positive impact on patient care. And, as the leader in laboratory and diagnostics information systems, Sunquest is proud to partner and support more than 1700 laboratories.

**References**

3. Mayo School of Health Sciences, 2015 (www.mayo.edu/mshs).

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