

THE PATHOLOGY WORKFORCE

AT A GLANCE



Pathologists are physicians who specialize in diagnosing diseases by examining tissues, cells, blood, and other body fluids. Often called the “doctor’s doctor,” pathologists devote their careers to providing answers to diagnostic questions that give patients, families, and clinical colleagues the information they need to guide treatment and care.

ASCP **STRONGER**TOGETHER

ascp.org

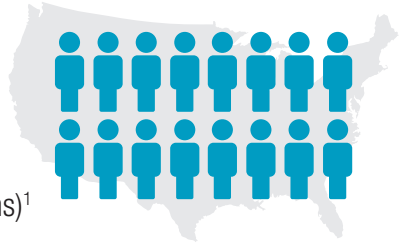
Pathology Starts Here:

A HIGH-IMPACT, HIGH-DEMAND SPECIALTY IN MEDICINE WITH A HIGH MATCH RATE AND 620+ RESIDENCY POSITIONS ANNUALLY.

US Pathologists in 2023:

21,244

(2.1% of US Physicians)[1]



Average of 621

residency positions from 2021-2025[2]

99.5% Fill Rate in 2025

87.8% Match Rate for US medical grads

COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

(average salary and salary growth)

$394,000

Average pathologist salary in 2025[6]

Salaries have Increased by

4.54%

every year since 2021[6]

JOB SECURITY AND GROWTH DATA

(job market growth and strong demand)

150% More Job Postings

2,908 *to* **7,381**

(2014-2018)[3] (2021-2025)[3]

New Pathologists Enter Workforce

600 in the US each year[5] *vs* **700-840** soon needed per year[5]

Projected by 2037:

16% Increase in workforce demand *or* **2,980** more pathologists needed in US[4]

EXCITING TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND MEANINGFUL PATIENT CARE OPPORTUNITIES

- Pathology is a specialty that's central to diagnosis, innovation, and quality patient care.
- The ASCP Patient Champions program[10] "teaches patients and caregivers about the laboratory so they can better understand their options and choose the treatments that work best for them."
- Pathologists are using digital pathology and AI to transform diagnostics and patient care.[11]

TIMELINE TO BECOME A PATHOLOGIST

Pathology Residency

3 years for AP-only or CP-only or 4 years for combined AP/CP

Fellowships

1 to 2 years, depending on subspecialty

Anatomic Pathology (AP)*
Surgical Pathology, Cytopathology, Hematopathology, Molecular Diagnostics, Autopsy

Clinical Pathology (CP)*
Microbiology, Transfusion Medicine, Hematology, Coagulation, Chemistry, Toxicology

*Requires Bachelors and MD degrees

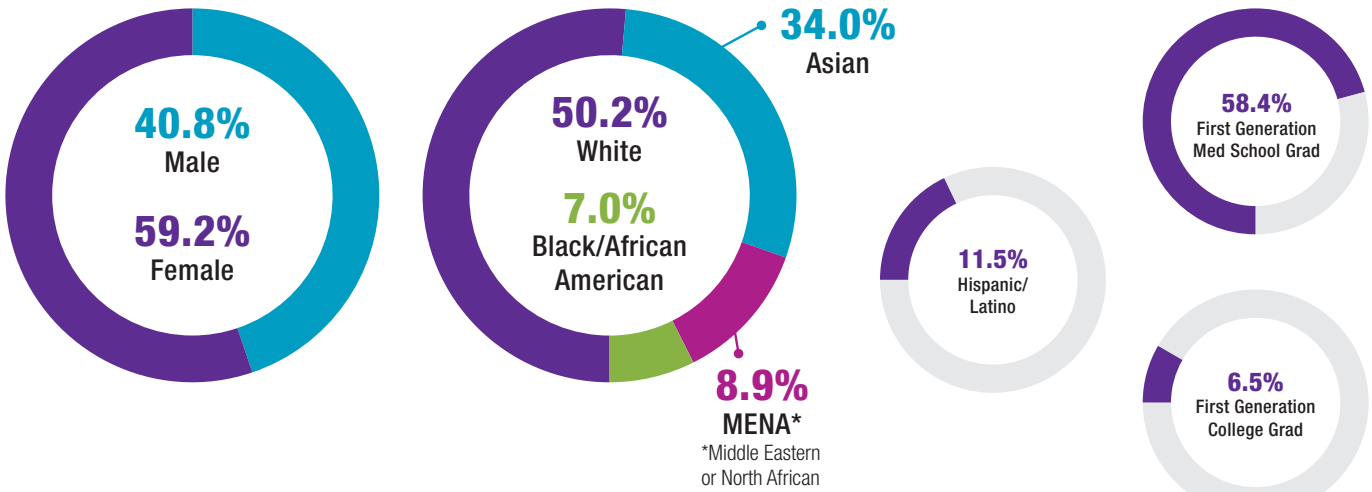
WELLNESS AND SATISFACTION

According to pathologists, this career has: "flexible work environments, limited call, more predictable hours, and the opportunity to make impactful decisions to improve the lives of the patients they serve."

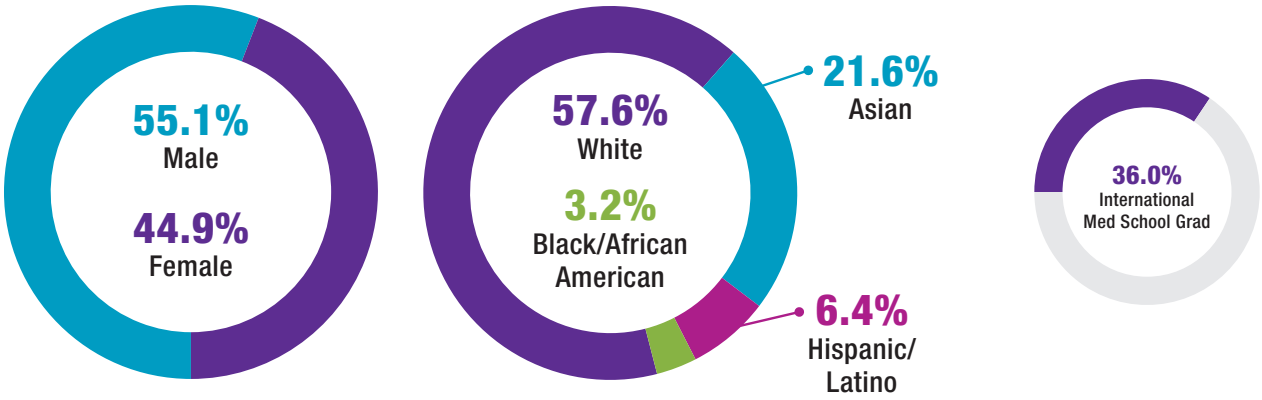
71.1% of Pathologists
reported that they were somewhat to very satisfied with their job[9]

WHO BECOMES A PATHOLOGIST?

Demographics of Matched Pathology Residents[7]



Demographics of Practicing Pathologists[1]



2020

35.6% of Pathologists
are 60 years or older, 4.1% greater than the US Non-Pathologist Physician Workforce[8]

2023

26.9% of Pathologists
are 65 years or older, 3.7% greater than US Non-Pathologist Physician Workforce

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PATHOLOGY

ASCP STRONGERTOGETHER

Misconception: "Pathologists don't interact with patients."

REALITY: Many perform fine needle aspiration procedures, run clinical apheresis services, consult in clinics, or discuss results directly with patients.

Misconception: "Pathologists only work with dead bodies."

REALITY: Forensic pathology is a vital subspecialty that provides crucial insights into causes of death. Pathologists may perform autopsies, but the majority of time is spent diagnosing disease in living patients.

Misconception: "Pathology is boring — just looking at slides."

REALITY: The field includes tumor boards, molecular diagnostics, AI, and teaching and leadership in healthcare systems.

Misconception: "Pathologists aren't involved in clinical medicine."

REALITY: Pathologists are key members of patient care teams and guide diagnosis and treatment plans.

Misconception: "Pathologists don't earn as much."

REALITY: Pathologists are among the top-earning cognitive specialties, with rising compensation and strong lifestyle balance.

References

1. Carlberg, R. US Physician Workforce Dashboard. Association of American Medical Colleges. 2026.
2. National Resident Matching Program, Results and Data 2025 Main Residency Match®. National Resident Matching Program, Washington, DC. 2025.
3. Pathologist Jobs Report, 2014-2025 summaries. PathologyOutlines.com.
4. Health Workforce Projections, Pathology Physicians. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. 2025.
5. Gross DJ, Robboy SJ, Cohen MB, et al. Strong Job Market for Pathologists: Results From the 2021 College of American Pathologists Practice Leader Survey. *Arch Pathol Lab Med*. 2023 Apr 1;147(4):434-441. doi: 10.5858/arpa.2022-0023-CP.
6. Medscape Physician Compensation Report, 2020-2026. Medscape. 2026.
7. National Resident Matching Program, Charting Outcomes™: Demographic Characteristics of Applicants in the Main Residency Match® and SOAP®. National Resident Matching Program, Washington, DC. 2026.
8. Black-Schaffer SW, Gross DJ, Nouri Z. et al. Re-evaluation of methodology for estimating US specialty physician workforce. Health Affairs Scholar. 2(4). doi: 10.1093/haschl/qxae033
9. Garcia E, Kundu I, Kelly M, Soles R, Mulder L, Talmon GA. The American Society for Clinical Pathology's Job Satisfaction, Well-Being, and Burnout Survey of Pathologists. *American Journal of Clinical Pathology*. 2020 Apr;153(4):435-448. doi: 10.1093/ajcp/aqaa010.
10. ASCP Patient Champions Program. American Society of Clinical Pathology. 2025.
11. Ahuja S, Zaheer S. Advancements in pathology: Digital transformation, precision medicine, and beyond. *Journal of Pathology Informatics*. 2025 Jan;16. doi:10.1016/j.jpi2024.100408.
12. George MR, Johnson KA, Berg MP, et al. Factors influencing US osteopathic medical students to choose pathology as a specialty. *Acad Pathol*. 2022;9(1):100034. doi:10.1016/j.acpath.2022.100034