

NONGYNECOLOGICAL PROCEDURE SKIN SCRAPINGS/TZANCK SMEARS – DIRECT SMEAR

I. Purpose

Direct smears are prepared to detect and characterize inflammatory or infectious processes of the skin.

II. Specimen

A. Direct smears

1. Indications

Detection and characterization of inflammatory/infectious processes of the skin, especially herpetic infections (Tzanck smear).

2. Specimen Required

Direct smear of material collected from a skin lesion, usually a vesicle.

3. Supplies

Two (or more) clean glass slides (frosted end), fixative (70% alcohol), skin scraping spatula and test requisition form.

4. Collection Procedure

- a. Label the slides with the patient's name and place in a container filled with 70% alcohol so that the slides are completely covered.
- b. Gently scrape the area of abnormality. If the abnormality is a vesicle, remove the covering and scrape both at the base of the vesicle and around the rim. Remove one of the slides from the fixative. Quickly and evenly smear the collected material on one of the glass slides. Immediately reimmerse the slide in fixative. Repeat the process with the second slide, if necessary, for better diagnostic yield. Repeat the process for additional areas if necessary.

HPC

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- c. Label each slide with the patient name and site source.
- d. **STORAGE:** Submit the specimen at room temperature along with the completed HPC requisition and copies of insurance card(s).

References

- A. Koss, Leopold G MD: *Diagnostic Cytology and its Histopathologic Basis*, Volume 2, JB Lippincott Company, 1992
- B. Lester, Susan C MD, PhD: *Manual of Surgical Pathology*, Churchill Livingstone, Philadelphia, 2001.