Pathology Specimen Locator: Guide for Investigators

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What is the Pathology Specimen Locator?

The Pathology Specimen Locator (PSL) is a distributed database indexing millions of discarded human specimens that can be used for translational studies such as biomarker discovery and validation. Investigators use PSL to *locate* paraffin and frozen specimens available across the Harvard pathology departments. When specimens matching the study criteria are located, investigators can *request* tissue and pathology services.

Why PSL?

Many scientists are calling for a closer connection between research and routine care delivery. Human specimens are routinely collected yet infrequently shared for research studies such as biomarker discovery and validation. While many reports suggest that access to well-characterized human tissues represents a valuable research resource in the post-genomic era, few studies have access to tissue quantities large enough for high- throughput experimentation. Similarly, the related clinical information remains invaluable yet oftentimes inaccessible to investigators. To address these needs, the Pathology Specimen Locator supports translational research studies that require human specimens and related clinical information.

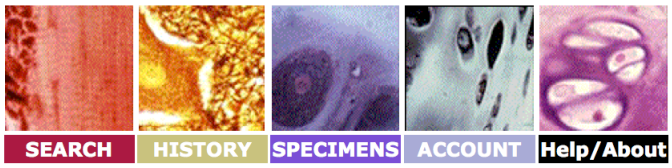
Do I have access to PSL?

If you are a Harvard investigator you can logon to PSL using your eCommons logon.
If you do not have an eCommons logon you can request one.

How do I find specimens for my study?

You can either start a search or ask us to help you locate specimens.
Each of these cases are described below.

How do I navigate PSL?

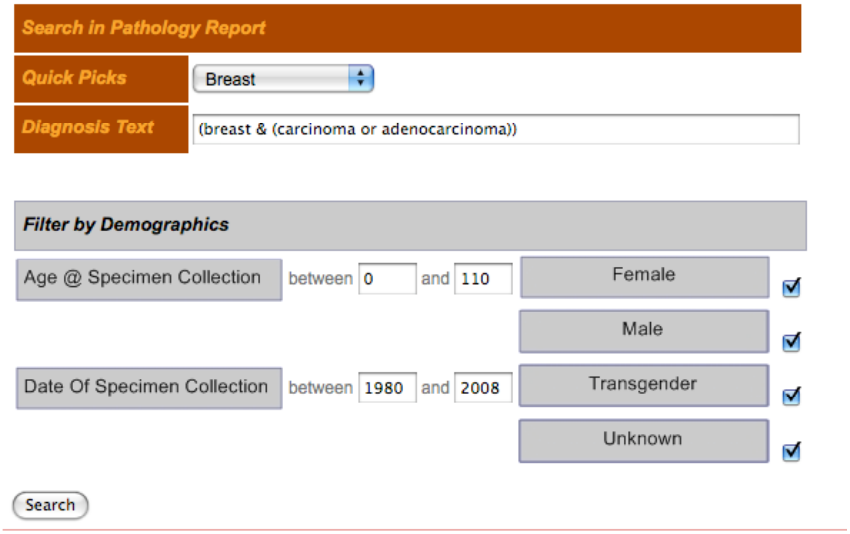


SEARCH	helps you locate specimens
HISTORY	records all of your searches and results
SPECIMENS	enables you review specimen requests in process or request specimens now
ACCOUNT	allows you to update contact information and request upgrades
HELP/ABOUT	provides useful answers to FAQs

Searching PSL

The **search screen** allows you enter terms appearing in the **Diagnosis Text** of the pathology reports. You can also filter your results based on **Patient Demographics** and date of tissue collection.

Example Search Screen:



Search In Pathology Report Diagnosis Text

Our query language allows you to create powerful search expressions against the pathology diagnosis text. We recommend starting with a "Quick Pick" and modifying our examples to perform your custom query.

Quick Pick

The quick pick prepopulates the diagnosis text search. Follow the examples below to modify the search criteria.

Diagnosis Text

Simple searches:

- single term: breast
- ALL terms: lymphoma and hodgkin
- ANY terms: glioblastoma or astrocytoma or glioma

Joining Boolean terms:

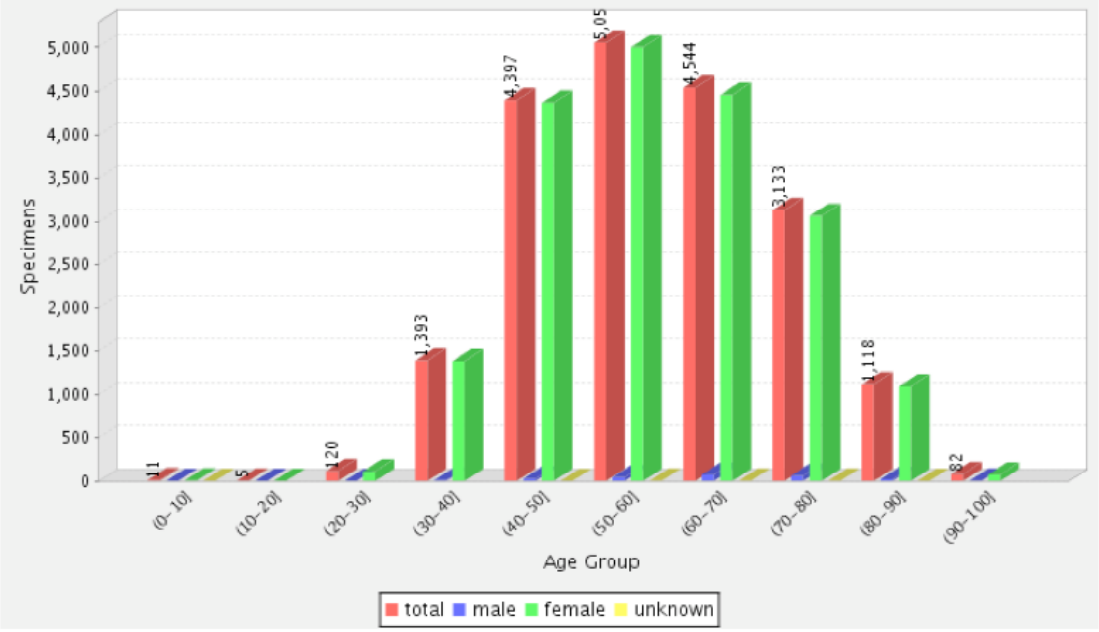
- breast and (carcinoma or adenocarcinoma)
- aml or (actute and leukemia)

Nesting Boolean terms:

- (melanoma or (skin and (carcinoma or adenocarcinoma)))

PSL will then search the network for samples at each specimen bank…..

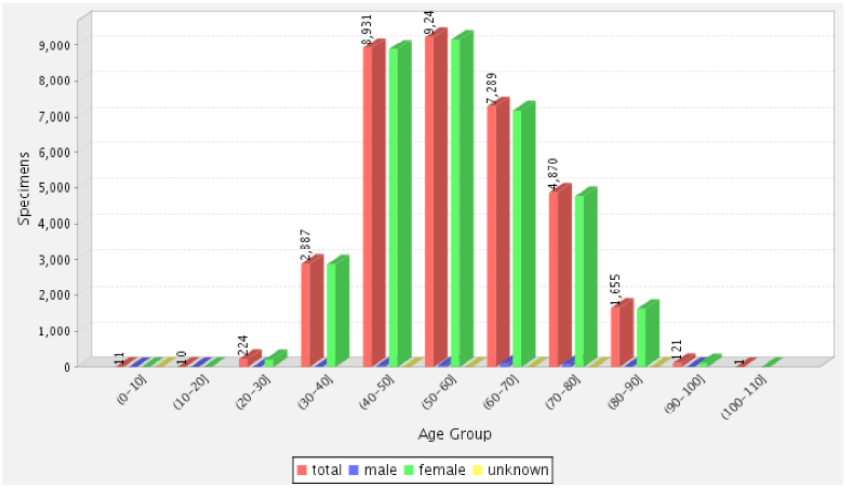
LOADING...



When the search is complete, PSL will report how many specimen banks were queried and the total number of specimens available. Public level users can then request specimens. Investigator level users can also review individual cases.

3 Peers responded in 61 seconds.

>>Restart Delete X

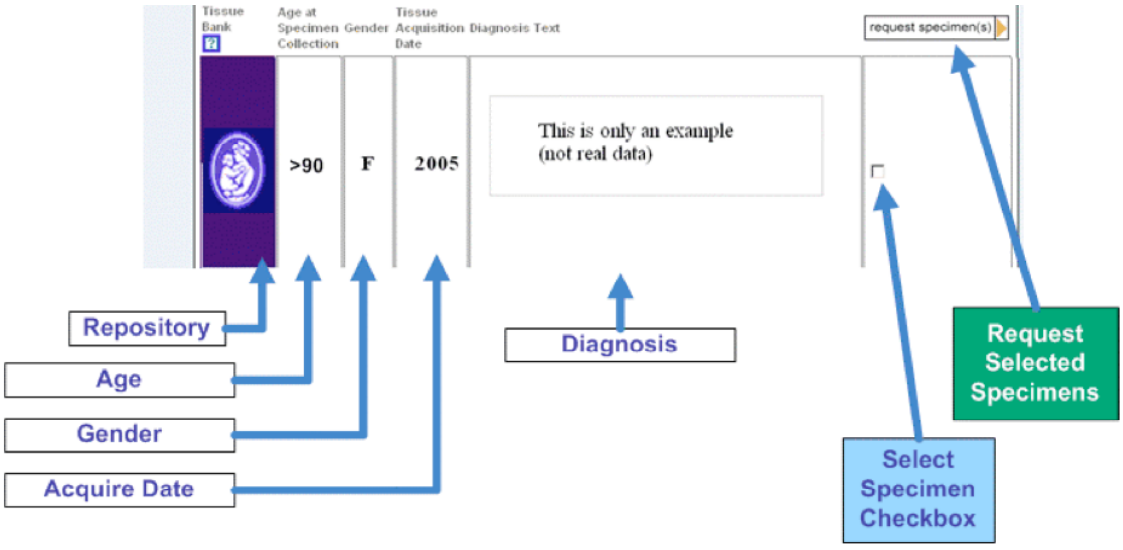


		Gender			
Age	**Total**	**F**	**M**	**T**	**U**
(0-10]	11	7	2	*	2
(10-20]	10	7	3	*	*
(20-30]	224	221	3	*	*
(30-40]	2887	2874	13	*	*
(40-50]	8931	8887	41	*	3
(50-60]	9242	9170	65	*	7
(60-70]	7289	7176	107	*	6
(70-80]	4870	4771	94	*	5
(80-90]	1655	1626	26	*	3
(90-100]	121	116	5	*	*
(100-110]	1	1	*	*	*
Total	**[35241]**				

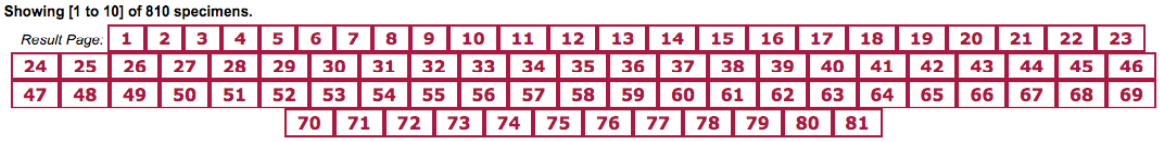
Peer | Gender | PatientAge | TissueDate | Search in Diagnosis Text | request specimen(s)

REVIEWING INDIVIDUAL CASES

For patient privacy protection, this section is intentionally left blank. When you have selected your specimens of interest, click the "request specimens" button.



You can sort your results using by Peer, Gender, Patient Age, or Tissue Date. You can also scroll through the results by clicking on the result page number. PSL remembers which specimens you have selected, simply click "**request specimens**" when you have made your final selections.



History of searches

All of your searches are saved and available by clicking the "history" tab.

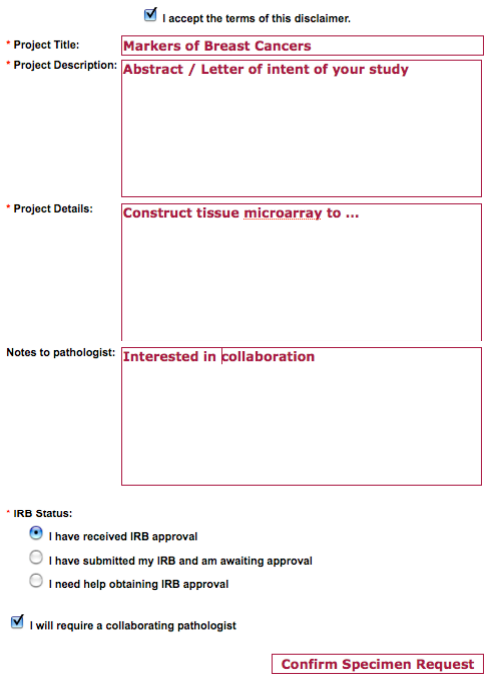
Cancer Type	Search In Diagnosis Text	Gender	Age @ Specimen Collection	Date of Specimen Collection
Bladder	((bladder or transitional cell) & carcinoma)	F M T U	0-110	1980-2008
Breast	((breast & (carcinoma or adenocarcinoma)))	F M T U	0-110	1980-2008
Stomach	((gastric or stomach) & (carcinoma or adenocarcinoma))	F M T U	0-110	1980-2008
Lung	(lung and (carcinoma or adenocarcinoma))	F M T U	0-110	1980-2008

Requesting Specimens

You can request specimens at any time, *either*

- We can help you search for specimens *OR*
- After you have searched the archives yourself *OR*
- After you have selected individual cases OR
- Using the DF/HCC pathology core system

No matter which path you choose, you are required to acknowledge the disclaimer and then tell us about your study, as shown below:

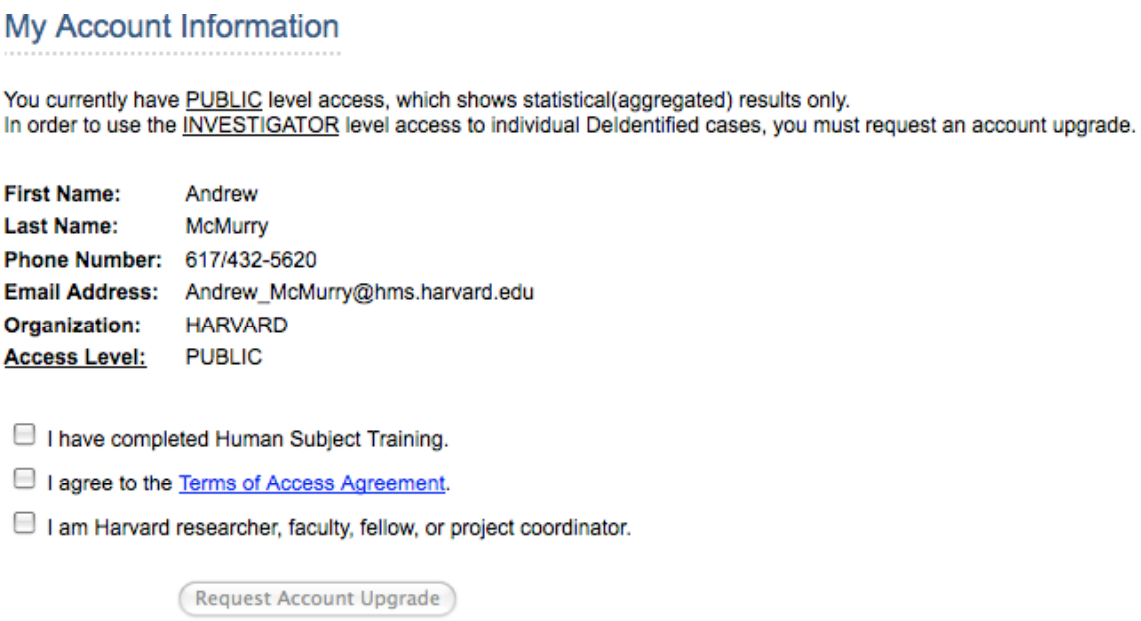


The specimen request is now tracked and can be accessed at any time by clicking the "specimens" navigation button.

Accounts

By default, “public” users are allowed to search and request tissue.
Upgraded “investigator” users can also review individual pathology cases.

Public users can easily request an account upgrade if they are Harvard faculty with the proper training and agreements. See below:



HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING

For the protection of human patient privacy and confidentiality, investigators using human materials for research must complete *Human Subject Research Training* before performing detailed queries and obtaining specimens.

Please complete the training at your **home institution.**
For convenience, the links are provided here below.

- Children's Hospital Boston (link for CH intranet users only)
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- Massachusetts General Hospital
- Brigham Women's Hospital
- Harvard Medical School
- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

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