

The authors would like to express our appreciation to those individuals who submitted thoughtful, constructive comments regarding the manuscript entitled “*Appropriate Use of Special Stains for Identifying Helicobacter Pylori: Recommendations from the Rodger C. Haggitt Gastrointestinal Pathology Society*”. We carefully considered each of the suggestions and incorporated many points germane to the manuscript message. Most notably, comments regarding submission of biopsies from multiple sites in a single cassette were modified and a section discussing testing of gastric polyps was added. Although some members suggested we delve into other topics (*e.g.* significance of *H. pylori*-immunopositive material in macrophages of the lamina propria, minimal criteria for a diagnosis of chronic gastritis, and others), space limitations and a paucity of available data precluded a thorough discussion of these issues. Concerns such as these may be better addressed in subsequent manuscripts that utilize a Delphic approach or similar methods. The GIPS Executive Committee is actively engaged in developing transparent mechanisms for synthesizing societal guidelines. We encourage interested members to submit suggestions for such discussion in the future.

This work represents the first position paper endorsed by the Rodger C. Haggitt Gastrointestinal Pathology Society (GIPS) and, thus, we believe that the GIPS membership should be aware of the steps taken to create it. We modeled our approach on that utilized by several other organizations that develop practice guidelines, including the College of American Pathologists, the International Society of Urologic Pathology, and the Association of Directors of Anatomic and Surgical Pathology. We also sought guidance from several senior figures in those groups as well as from within our own society. The topic of ancillary testing for *H. pylori* was formally addressed in the GIPS forum at the 2011 USCAP meeting and again at the GIPS forum during the 2012 USCAP meeting. Several task groups comprising a mixed population of academic and non-academic GI pathologists were organized and charged with reviewing the literature and developing recommendations for ancillary stain usage. A draft document was created, vetted among members of the GIPS executive committee, and released to the general GIPS membership for review. The overall feedback was positive. More than 85% of respondents endorsing the manuscript, which exceeds the level of agreement required for consensus by the abovementioned organizations. We incorporated several recommendations from the GIPS membership into the manuscript and again vetted it among members of the GIPS Executive Committee while providing them with an enumeration of comments such that they could confirm that major concerns were addressed. Finally, we submitted the manuscript to a senior group of GIPS members for critical review. None of these individuals participated as authors or serve on the GIPS Executive Committee. The resultant manuscript will be submitted for peer review during the publication process and a final version will be posted on the website.

We believe that this manuscript addresses many of the controversies surrounding usage of ancillary stains in the detection of *H. pylori* and fairly reflects evidence in the current literature. We thank you for your contributions to this important work.