

Finn Pathologists

The Veterinary Laboratory

Liver Biopsy Techniques

Liver biopsy techniques include:

- Tru-cut liver biopsy
- Blind percutaneous biopsy
- Ultrasound guided biopsy
- Laparoscopy and biopsy
- Wedge biopsy taken at laparotomy

In general terms the small samples collected by Tru-cut biopsy means that multiple samples should be collected. This has one advantage in that several areas of liver can be sampled which may provide a range of changes to give a more representative picture overall. On the other hand the size of the samples may limit judgement of the acinar structure and any structural changes that have occurred; this may affect the accuracy of the histological diagnosis.

Wedge biopsy provides the pathologist with a larger area of parenchyma to examine and the relative appearance of portal tracts, central veins and hepatocyte plates. However a single wedge biopsy from the edge of a single lobe may not be representative of the entire liver, leading to a false result.

Ideally, whichever technique is used, several areas of liver should be sampled and the biopsies should be as large as is feasible.