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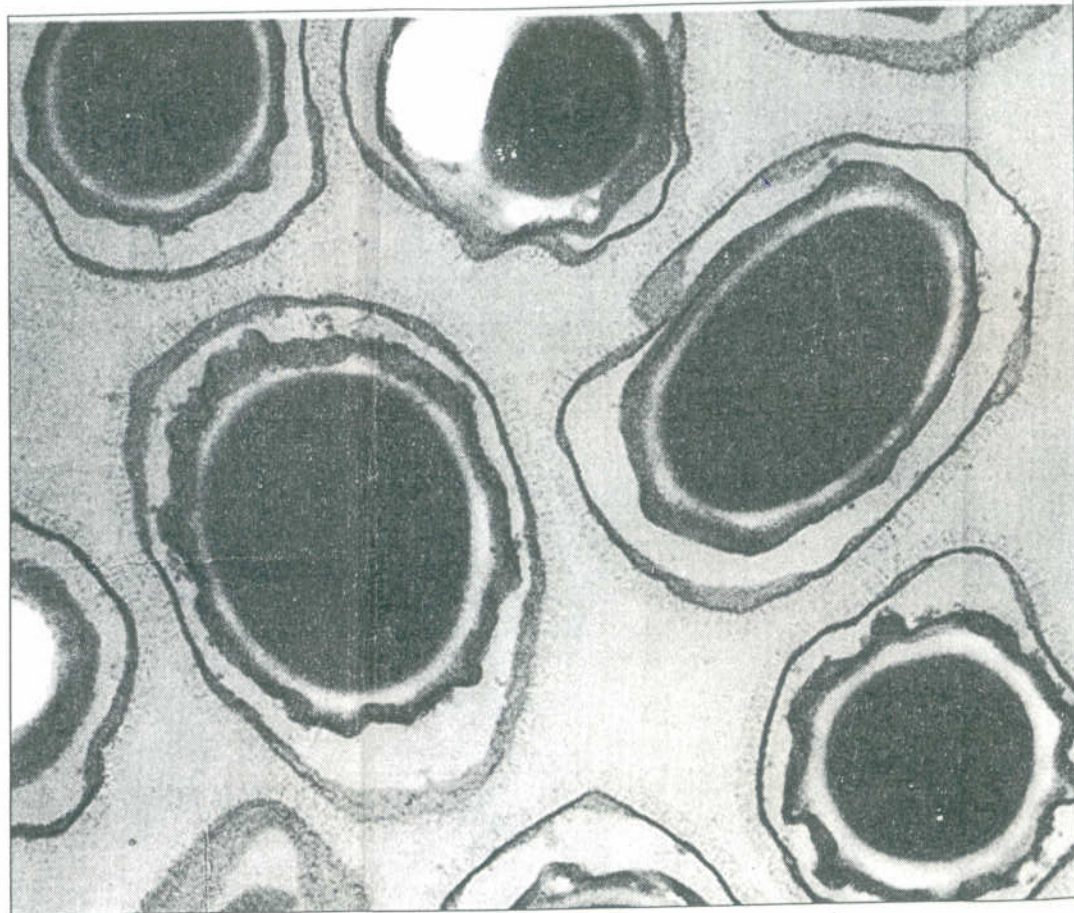
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DEADLY SLIDE: A prepared culture of Anthrax spores.

mon and highly specialised tests.

In addition, a pathologist may be involved in basic laboratory science, direct patient care, public health, infection control, research and teaching, and business management of the laboratory.

Is pathology an option for students who also have an interest in business?

Pathology is a specialised division of medicine that accounts for only about 3% of total medical bills. However, pathology services are absolutely critical to the accurate diagnosis and treatment of disease, and contribute significantly to cost-effective patient care.

Despite the fact that 35% of all pathology costs are foreign currency based, the price of tests in South Africa are less than their international equivalents, although of equal quality.

Quality assurance through accreditation of laboratories to international standards is accessed through the South African National Accreditation Service.

Because of the highly specialised nature of the profession, and the necessity to constantly update equipment, most pathology practices have national networks to make efficient use of resources.

A single pathology laboratory can employ up to 1 800 people nationwide, of which around 40% may be pathologists.

Other staff members include medical technologists, computer support personnel, training managers, customer support personnel, administrative staff, drivers, and cleaning staff.

What attributes do you need to be a successful pathologist?

To be a successful pathologist you need to be a logical and creative thinker, able to consider a problem from all angles. You must also be precise and accurate and be able to work independently.

In addition, a broad interest in all fields of medicine is critical, as pathologists have to consult with doctors from every speciality, from heart disease to cancer.

Some pathologists require knowledge of surgical skills, which enable them to study and dissect specimens from operations.

If you aspire to management you must also have good people management skills and a head for business.

□ The National Pathology Group can be contacted on (011) 482-8212