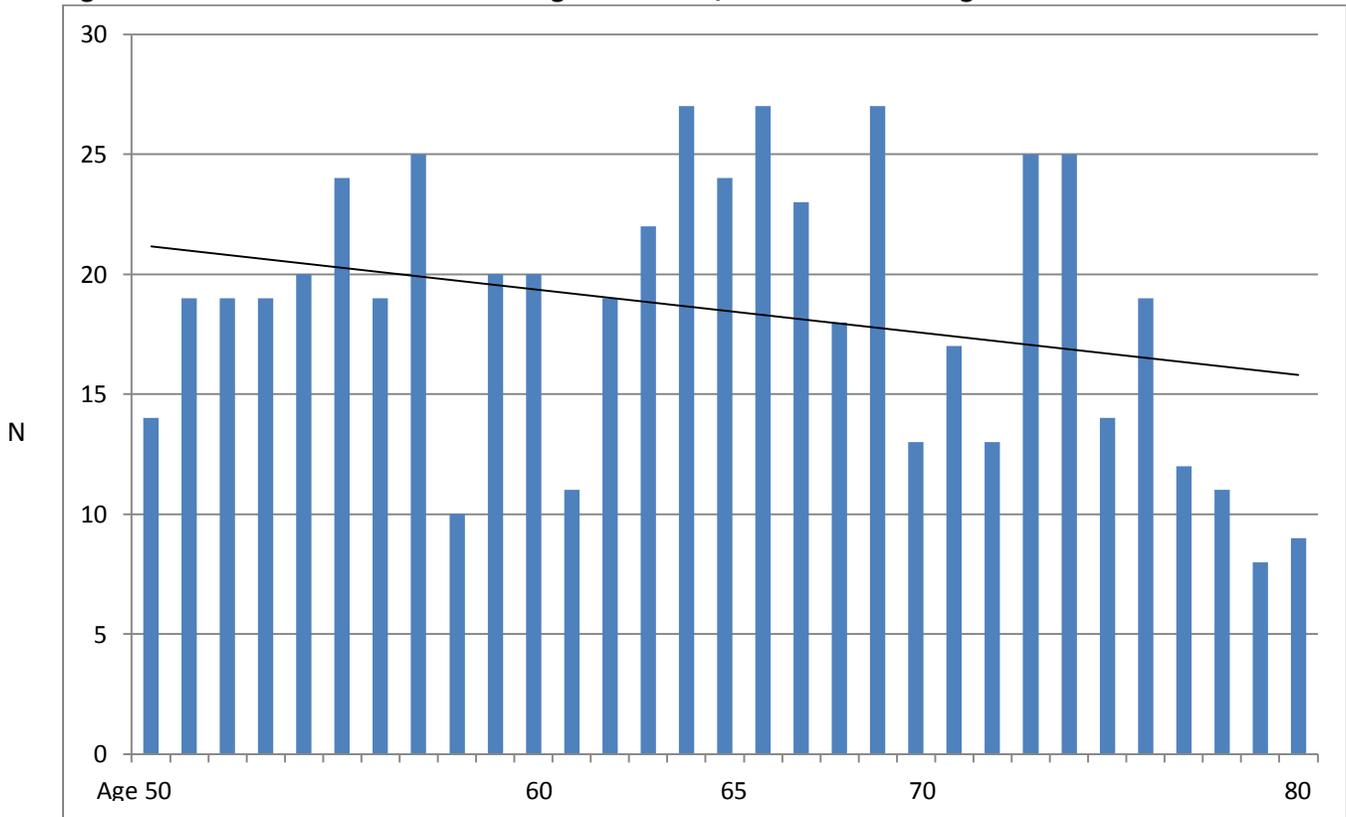


**NAME Forensic Pathologist Retirement**  
 Prepared by Randy Hanzlick, December 12, 2020

This review is an attempt to identify the retirement rate of forensic pathologist members/fellows of NAME, and what the impact of retirement may be on NAME membership.

The graph below shows the age distribution of 573 board certified forensic pathologist members of NAME for whom birthdates/ages are known.

**Age Distribution of 573 Forensic Pathologist Members/Fellows of NAME Ages 50-80 in Year 2020**



The average number of people at each age is 19 and the range is 8 to 27. Although we do not know the actual average age of forensic pathologists who retire, there *is* an average age, of course. The data suggest that no matter what the average age of retirement actually is, between 8 and 27 people (average 19) will retire per year, which means that about 3% of NAME forensic pathologists would retire per year on average ( $19/573 = 0.03$ ).

Between 2011 and 2020, an average of 34 forensic pathologists joined NAME each year. We know that over the past 10 years, about 7 forensic pathologists died per year on average. If we accept the idea that about 19 forensic pathologists will retire per year on average, then the annual growth in NAME forensic pathologists would be  $(34 - 7 - 19) = 8$  per year. The actual situation is probably better than that because not all forensic pathologist deaths involve current NAME members.

## Comments:

Birthdates were known for about 70% of those who were NAME members in 2010. We will assume that the sample is representative. Birthdates for those who joined NAME since 2011 were known for 32%. That lower sample size is probably not significant since the main pool of those joining NAME since 2011 are fellows who have recently completed forensic pathology fellowship training, and even today, most would not be of age 50 or older and thus, would not be included in the graph or fall within expected retirement age.

For most of those represented in the graph, ages in year 2020 were calculated based on their known age in year 2010 (10 years was added to each member's age to calculate age in 2020) and it is assumed that most of those now under age 80 would still be members, accepting the fact that some will have died and those over age 80 now would be of Emeritus (retired) status.

Emeritus (retired) members and members over 80 years of age have been excluded because we assume most such members are already retired, at least from traditional forensic pathology practice. Those under age 50 were also excluded because retirement at such ages is unlikely.

In terms of average retirement age, some labor data suggest that an age targeted by physicians for retirement is 68. We know the average age of Emeritus (basically retired) NAME members is 77 with a range of 59-93 but we do not know at what age each of those actually became Emeritus. We do not know the actual average retirement age of forensic pathologists. So, at present, we just have to accept that there *is* an average retirement age, and based on the data, we can expect that about 19 forensic pathologists will retire at that age each year, on average. We also know that some who have retired may continue to work as consultants or in other part-time settings, but we do not have data for those.

We do not know what the impact on NAME forensic pathologist membership would be as a result of people who cease practicing forensic pathology but who are not retired.

It is difficult to perform analyses such as those related to age, mortality, retirement, and attrition because multiple sources of data are needed and, in most cases, the data available are incomplete in any given database. Assumptions must be made based on sample sizes that are less than complete. That being said, data suggest that the NAME forensic pathologist membership will grow, albeit slowly, when considering the impact of mortality and retirement.

It is hoped that these data can be useful to NAME Committees such as Workforce Development, Forensic Pathology Fellow Training, and Data committees. If the data is not useful or is questionable, perhaps the holes in data can be identified and addressed by these committees so that NAME can have more complete data in the future.