A critical aspect of every oral examination is the observation of all the oral mucosae. The goal is to identify any differences in the appearance of the tissues from what would normally be expected. When the difference is recognized a process should be initiated to further assess the observation and develop a plan to diagnose and manage the change. Traditionally, oral pathology has been taught in dental schools by presenting either clinical or histologic images linked to specific diagnoses and asking the student to recall these names. In clinical practice alterations in the oral soft and hard tissues rarely resemble the images from either dental school classes or oral pathology textbooks. The objective of this presentation is to guide the participants to develop an approach to recognize and manage soft tissue changes that can be incorporated into their daily clinical practice. This approach builds on a dentist’s strengths resulting from their clinical care of patients to provide a more comprehensive strategy to develop a differential diagnosis. The potential to support a private practitioner’s patient care through applications of TeleDentistry are included.

The course will use images from actual clinical cases that have been submitted by dentists in British Columbia to be evaluated by an oral pathologist. These are all actual cases that have occurred primarily in private dental practices. Most of these images were provided directly from the private dental practice and included some information with respect to the patient’s signs and symptoms. These cases will be used to develop a process applicable in every clinical practice and establish a TeleDentistry approach to support the dentist in private practice when something “different” is noticed during the oral soft and hard tissue examination. The importance of developing a differential diagnosis will be stressed in this presentation in order to insure that important conditions are not overlooked when evaluating a patient. In contrast to the expectations in a dental school oral pathology course, it is not important to make the diagnosis of any oral lesion clinically the first time it is observed, but rather, to appropriately recognize and manage the observed lesion.

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES
1. Recognize changes in oral soft tissues representative of pathologic changes
2. Evaluate the lesions in a standardized format based on using clinical examination strengths generated in practice.
3. Develop a process to manage a change identified in the tissue

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