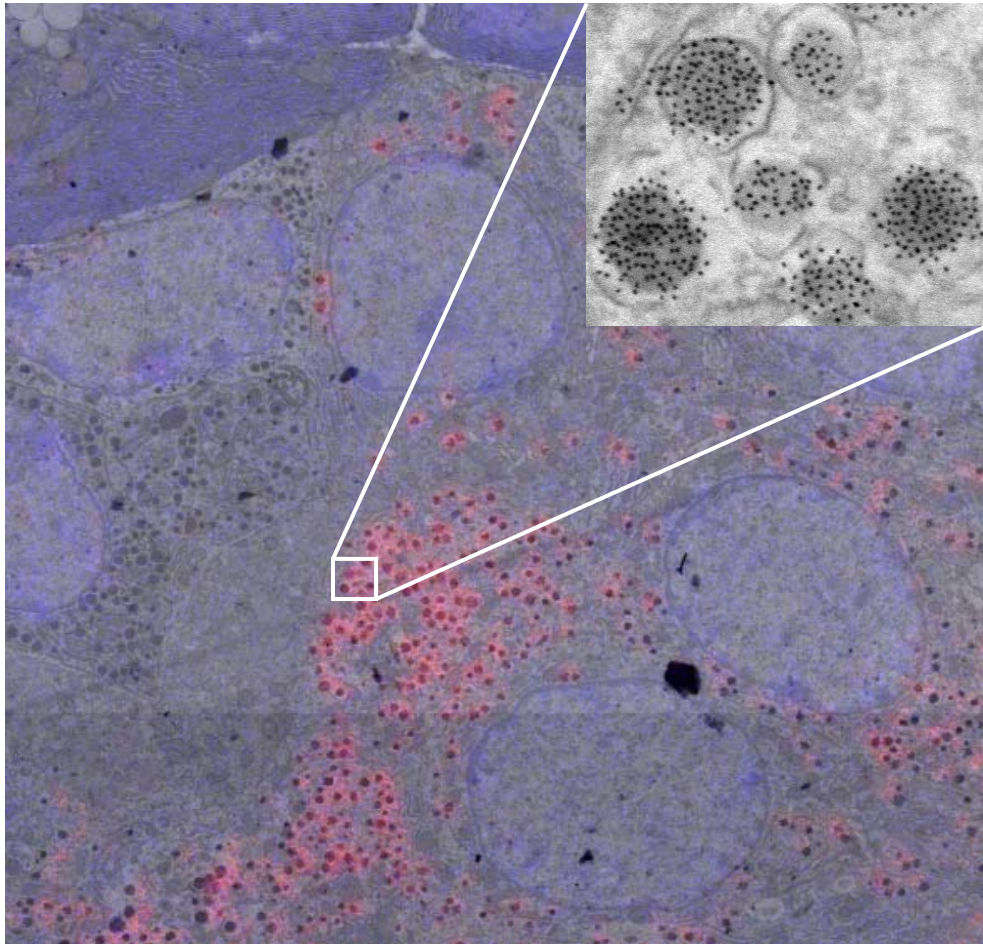


Cellular Analysis with SEM



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*Workshop and data based on original material (with permission) by:
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Introduction

This workshop is part of the course High-Resolution Imaging for the MSc Nanobiology at TU Delft and complements the lectures and demo's on Scanning Electron Microscopy. In the lectures, students should get a basic understanding of how electron microscopes (EMs) in general, and scanning EM's in particular, work and how they can be applied in biology. Demonstrations on various microscopes serve to illustrate operation and applications of SEMs. The aim of this workshop is to make students familiar with EM data of biological tissue and to learn recognize various biological structures within the tissue. It also illustrates several novel SEM-based applications, such as large-scale EM and correlative imaging.

The workshop consists of several parts with self-study (homework) assignments. It uses online data, so computer with internet access is needed. Some sources for further reading are contained at the end of this document.

Goals

After this workshop, students should be able to:

1. recognize and interpret electron microscopic images, with regard to tissue characteristics, cell types, organelles, and macromolecular complexes.
2. understand and explain how contrast is generated in these images.
3. describe the advantages of large-scale and correlative imaging for tissue analysis.

Additional reading:

(all on the blackboard site)

Ravelli et al.; Scientific Reports (2013): www.nature.com/srep/2013/130508/srep01804/full/srep01804.html

De Boer, Hoogenboom, Giepmans; Nature Methods 12 (6) 503-513 (2015)

Peddie, Collinson; Micron 61, 9-19 (2014)

Part 1: Electron microscopy structure/function

A cell contains organelles that are essential for its function. Depending on cellular function, one type of cell will have a higher number of certain organelles than others. To check if you know the various cell organelles, examine the following schematic drawing of a cell (an exocrine cell).

Assignment:

- Identify the various cell organelles by placing the right number at the right line
- State the main function(s) of the organelle in the table

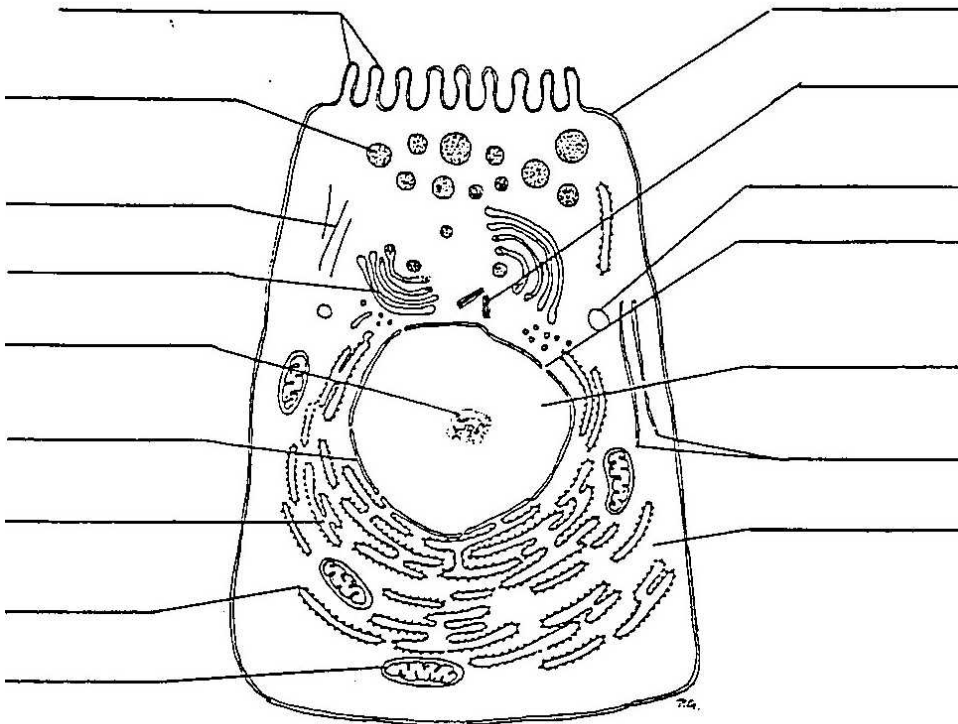


Fig. 1. Source: *Laboratory Manual of Histology*, Pappas. (W. C. Brown, 1990)

Structure	Function	Structure	Function
1. centriole		9. microtubules	
2. cytosol		10. mitochondria	
3. Golgi complex		11. microvilli	
4. nucleus		12. nucleolus	
5. nuclear envelope		13. plasma membrane	
6. nuclear pore		14. ribosomes	
7. lysosome		15. rough endoplasmic reticulum	
8. microfilaments		16. secretion drops	

Part 2: From tissue to molecular complexes

In this workshop, we will look at tissue material from a rat suffering from type 1 diabetes (see Ravelli *et al* in the further reading section). Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an auto-immune disease that results in degradation of the insulin-producing beta cells (Fig. 2), which are located in the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas (Fig. 3). A cure does not exist; patients depend on lifelong insulin therapy. Moreover, the trigger that causes the disease is also unknown. Finding alternatives for insulin therapy and making advances in etiology of T1D benefits from a full structural and functional insight into Islets of Langerhans. With microscopy techniques samples can be studied at different magnifications. Typically, light microscopy covers large fields of view, see Fig. 3, a histological depiction of the islets of Langerhans. With EM, Islet morphology can be studied at the highest possible resolution, however, conventional EM only provides selected snapshots. This makes data susceptible to user interpretation and bias, and data then also lacks the full structural context. In the assignments below, we will look at a section of a single islet.

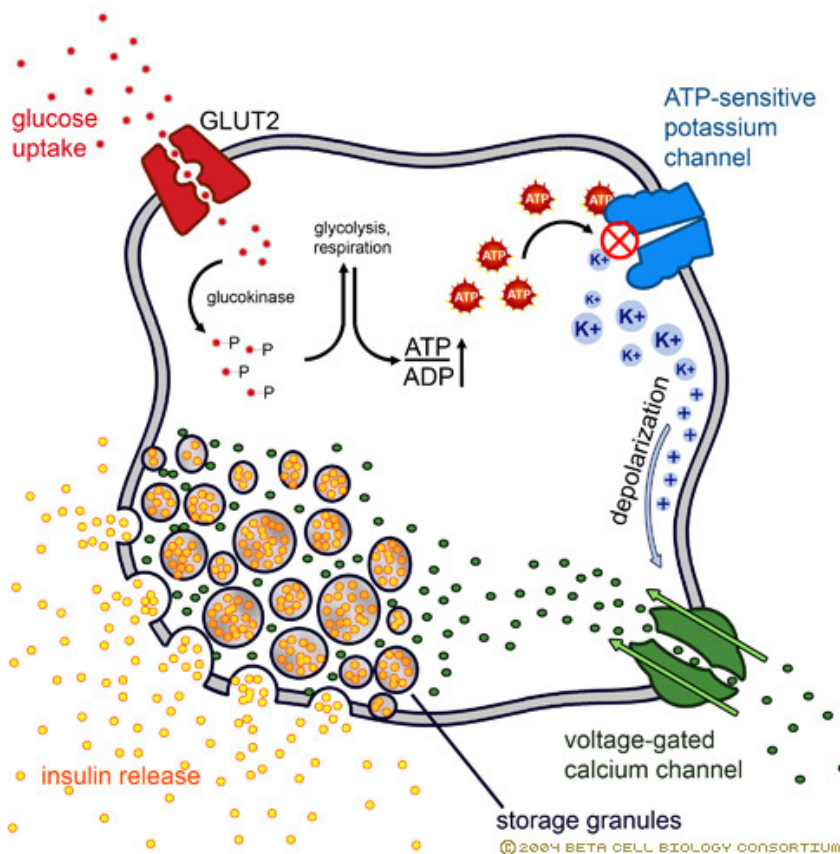


Fig. 2. Insulin secretion in beta cells caused by the increasing blood sugar levels.

Uptake of glucose by GLUT2 and glycolytic phosphorylation of glucose causes the ATP:ADP ratio to rise. This inactivates the potassium channel which depolarizes the membrane so that a voltage-dependent calcium channel opens. The increase in the calcium concentration leads to the release of insulin

Source: www.betacell.org

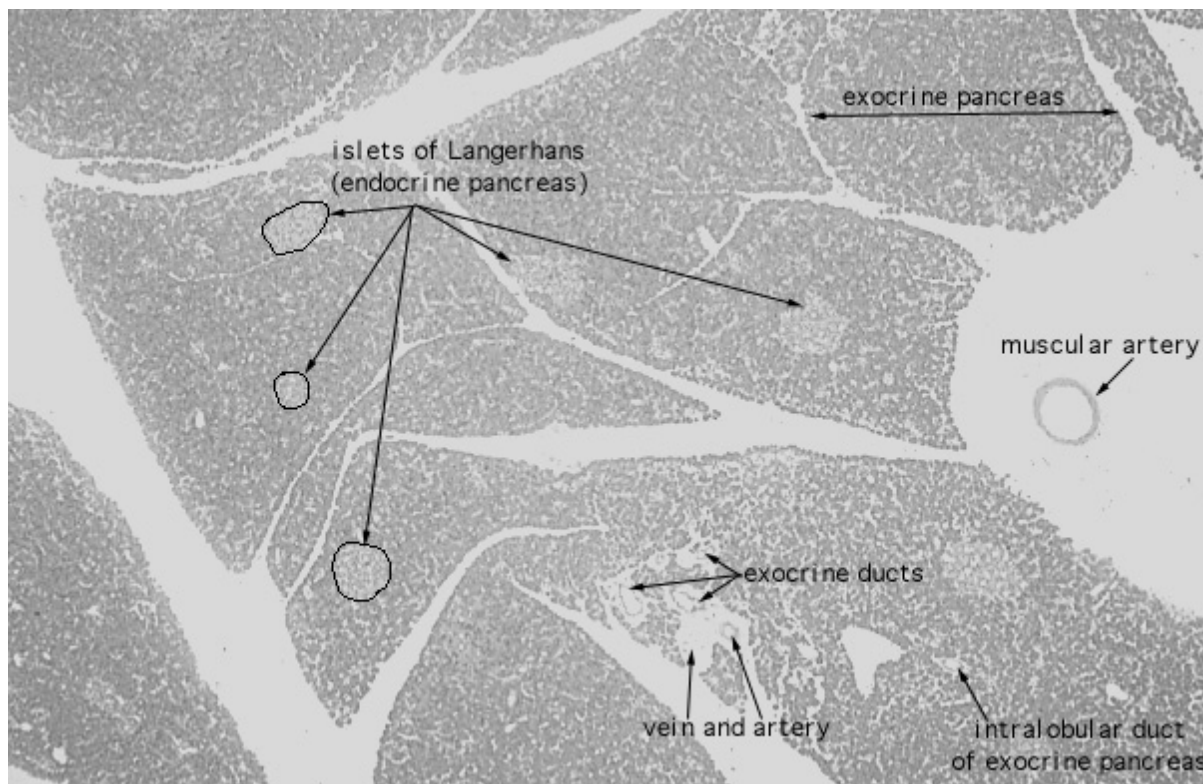


Fig. 3. The beta cells grouped in the islets of Langerhans in the pancreas. The rest of the pancreas consists of exocrine tissue where digestive enzymes are produced. The endocrine tissue – the islets of Langerhans – produces other hormones besides insulin.

Source: www.bu.edu/histology/p/10401loa.htm

Assignment:

Draw a scale bar in Figures 1, 2, and 3, indicating the estimated dimensions. Try to indicate the various scales in Fig. 2. Compare this with what you would fill in after completing all assignments.

Further reading: Functional Histology, Kerr (Mosby, 2nd ed. 2009) p404-407.

1E. Depicted here is a cross-section of a bundle of unmyelinated axons. The bundle was discovered more or less by chance: the electrons cause the axons to be slightly lighter. These contain round tubules and light-grey filaments. How many axons do you see here?

1F. In some exocrine cells the nucleus is not visible. Why?

2A. The exocrine cell contains a lot of rough ER for protein synthesis. The content will be secreted with cytoplasmic vesicles and eventually end up in the:

- a. blood
- b. digestive tract

2B. The alpha cell produces glucagon, which is visible in the dark vesicles. Glucagon ensures that the blood sugar levels:

- a. increase
- b. decrease

2C. The depicted beta cell is in bad shape: the rat has diabetes. Later you will compare the differences with a healthy rat. Do you recognize the various organelles? Only a few granules with hormones are visible, in particular to the bottom left of the nucleus. The crystal-like shape is typical and is even more pronounced in human beta cells. Which hormone is it?

2D. Somatostatin-producing delta cells also form part of the islets, although they comprise only a few percent. We can distinguish various cell types thanks to the different granule structures. How can we differentiate between somatostatin granules and glucagon or insulin?

2G. Note that this is an inflammatory cells. What does the presence of these cells indicate?

2H. What is the approximate size of this erythrocyte?

2I. What is typical of the nucleus of a monocyte?

2J. This phagocyte is (a) passive **or** (b) active, because:

2L. The leukocyte has black spots on it. What is the approximate size of these? What could they be?

3A. The rough ER is important among other things for:

The black spots measure approximately nm. What are these? Are they located on the inside or outside of the ER?

3B. A mitochondrion is easily recognized by:

3C. The cell nucleus contains:

3D. The Golgi apparatus can be nano-anatomically distinguished from the ER because it:

4B. Insulin is produced by the cells.

4C./4D./4E. Exosomes are secreted granules. Using the various stages, is it possible to form a picture of exosome release? Yes/No

In what way does exosome release differ from vesicle fusion in, for instance, insulin secretion?

4F. Glucagon is produced by the cells.

4G. Somatostatin is produced by the cells.

5. Structure / function of vesicles

5A. Dense bodies are known as such because:

5D. These are about the smallest vesicles in existence. What is their diameter?

5E. And what is the diameter of the lipid droplets?

6B. Notice the dark black contrast. How is the contrast formed / Which atom is accumulated in this membranous mass?

7. Macromolecules are just barely discernible at these image settings. There are certain characteristics which allow the various macromolecules to be recognized.

7A. How many nuclear pores can you distinguish in the ENTIRE cross-section of the nuclear membrane?

7B. This is the tip of the nucleus where nuclear pores can also be distinguished. How many are there?

7K. Every cell has a pair of centrioles. Give a rough estimate of how many centrioles should be visible in this dataset. Explain.

Assignment 6: Islets during type 1 diabetes

Following this introduction to the EM of cells, organelles and macromolecules, we will now also briefly look at the effect of type 1 diabetes in the rat model. Return to the homepage (nanotomy.nl) and compare Dataset 1 (control) with Dataset 5 (diabetes).

1. What is the blood sugar level of the healthy animal? And that of the animal with diabetes?
2. This is caused by a deficit in:
3. This is caused by the breakdown of beta cells. Insulinitis clearly exists, since Dataset 5 shows many more:
4. The beta-cell destruction is clearly recognizable due to the following characteristics (name at least 3):

Two stages have now been shown. This should have given you an impression of how large-scale SEM can help in understanding diseases. If you have time, you can further look at the other stages of which datasets are available on this site. This can also be done at home.

Assignment 7: Dealing with large-scale EM

In the previous assignments you have looked at large-scale EM data used to investigate diabetes. You have seen how cellular components and tissue characteristics can be recognized using biological knowledge. Bear in mind that all annotations and colourings that you have seen and used in this assignment have been made by hand, requiring visual inspection of the entire dataset! Large-scale and volume EM is rapidly growing in the past few years (see further reading, and there are also other examples available on nanotome.org) and you can probably imagine that this manual analysis will become a bottleneck. For the shown example (Type 1 diabetes), describe where the regions of interest in the dataset are located and think of ways to improve guiding to these areas.