

They are identified under the microscope when histology is performed on the brain. Lewy bodies appear as spherical masses that displace other cell components. Lewy bodies may be found in the brainstem (within the substantia nigra) or within the cortex. A classical Lewy body is an eosinophilic cytoplasmic inclusion consisting of a dense core surrounded by a halo of 10-nm-wide radiating fibrils, the primary structural component of which is alpha-synuclein. Cortical Lewy bodies are also composed of alpha-synuclein fibrils, but are less defined and lack halos. In histopathology, cortical Lewy bodies are a distinguishing feature for dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB), but may occasionally be seen in ballooned neurons characteristic of Pick's disease and corticobasal degeneration, as well as in patients with other tauopathies.

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