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On the Cover

What's the diagnosis? Architecture of the human renal medulla. The large panel is a longitudinal section extending from the outer medulla (right edge) towards the papilla tip (left edge); collecting ducts (blue) are identified by expression of the water channel aquaporin 2 and descending vasa recta (green) by expression of the urea transporter UT-B. The inner medulla consists of loosely organized clusters of collecting ducts, with collecting ducts of each cluster gradually joining together as they descend along the corticopapillary axis. The inset is a transverse section through the inner medulla; descending thin limbs (red) are identified by expression of the water channel aquaporin-1 and descending vasa recta (green) by expression of the urea transporter UT-B. These segments lie at the periphery of collecting duct clusters; collecting ducts are not shown in the inset but reside within the black holes. This arrangement of descending thin limbs and descending vasa recta lying at the periphery of each collecting duct cluster continues as the tubules and blood vessels descend along the corticopapillary axis. This organization may underlie preferential fluid and solute flows associated with the urine concentrating process. Large panel, $\times 20$; inset, $\times 50$ (Thomas Pannabecker, University of Arizona)