

Operational Update for Otago/Southland Community Referrers February 2014

<p>TEST RELATED</p> <p>Urine Drug Testing</p> <p>Urine Methadone</p> <p>Lyme Disease</p> <p>Measles Outbreak</p> <p>Group B Strep testing in pregnancy</p>	<p>REPORTING OF RESULTS</p> <p>- Patient Privacy</p> <p>- Copies to patients</p> <p>PATIENT IDENTIFICATION</p> <p>REFERRAL RIGHTS</p> <p>PERIPHERAL FNA CLINICS</p>
--	---

TEST RELATED

Pre-employment and medico-legal urine drug testing

From 1.03.14, Southern Community Laboratories will no longer provide an in-house service for medico-legal / pre-employment testing for abused drugs. There are a number of reasons for this:

- (1) The tests we use now are intended to be screening tests only – with a recommendation that all positive tests are followed by a confirmatory test at additional cost. We are concerned that users may put undue weight on screening test results without requesting confirmation.
- (2) Our ‘usual’ specimen collection processes do not comply with the relevant Australasian standard for these tests. There is no requirement that they do so but where medico-legal or employment decisions are made based on a urine drug test, it is important that appropriate chain of custody procedures are followed.

Therefore, from 1.03.14, we will cease to provide a service for medicolegal / workplace drug testing. There are currently 2 providers of this service in New Zealand that adhere to the relevant standard – Environmental Science & Research (ESR) and Canterbury Health Laboratories (CHL). ESR is able to provide details of over 700 individuals and organisations that are registered to collect urine specimens according to the current ANZ 4308:2008 standard. We believe that this change in practice will result in a more comprehensive service with a robust and legally defensible collection procedure allowing you to have a higher level of confidence in the results you receive.

Contact details:

ESR 04 914 0731 wdt@esr.cri.nz

<http://www.esr.cri.nz/competencies/workplacedrugtesting/Pages/collectingagents.aspx>

Canterbury Health Laboratories 0800 843 522 info@workplacedrugtest.co.nz;

<http://www.labnet.health.nz/testmanager/index.php?fuseaction=main.displaytest&testid=1321>

Urine tests for methadone

Effective from 2.2.14 the Biochemistry Department has replaced the urine test for the presence of methadone with one for the presence of the methadone metabolite EDDP (2-ethylene-1,5-dimethyl-3,3-diphenylpyrrolidine). This will provide reliable information about whether or not methadone has been ingested.

Lyme Disease

Specimens submitted for Lyme disease serology will not be forwarded for processing unless there has been PRIOR discussion with, and approval of the test, by the Clinical Microbiologist. The reasons for this policy are twofold: Firstly, borreliosis serology has relatively low specificity, and results in more false than true positives if performed on patients with a low pre-test probability of the diagnosis. Secondly, the antigenic composition of *Borrelia burgdorferi* varies substantially over its wide distribution, so that appropriate serological testing requires reasonably precise knowledge of the geographical region in which the infection might have been acquired. Note: *B. burgdorferi* is not present in New Zealand

Measles outbreak –information for referrers

As you may be aware there have been 16 confirmed cases of measles in Auckland so far this year, and there is concern that there may be transmission occurring in the community. Transmission to other areas of the country remains a risk.

If you have a patient in whom you suspect measles or who may have been in contact with a measles case it is vital that you speak to Public Health before collecting specimens for laboratory testing.

Measles is highly contagious and is a notifiable disease. Public Health will advise the best test and whether or not the patient should have a home visit test rather than presenting to the collection room. This is to protect the public.

It is also a timely reminder about the importance of measles vaccination. Please note that measles immune status (ie: Measles IgG) is not a funded test, so the patient will be charged unless it is requested by the Medical Officer of Health for outbreak management.

Kind regards, Dr James Ussher, Medical Microbiologist, Southern Community Laboratories
Phone: 03 4702924 / 0277078576 Email: james.ussher@sclabs.co.nz

Group B Streptococcus screening in pregnancy

A reminder that from 1st March 2014 we will be restricting LIM broth culture for GBS screening to requests fulfilling all of the following:

1. A recto-vaginal swab is provided. The swab can be collected either by the health practitioner or the patient. Instructions are as follows –
 - Using a trans-swab, swab the lower vagina (vaginal introitus)
 - Then, using the same swab, swab the rectum (i.e., insert swab through the anal sphincter)
 - Put the swab in transport media
2. GBS screening is clearly requested (tick “Combined Vaginal/Rectal Swab” on the Midwives request form)
3. The patient is documented (in the clinical details section of the request form) to be ≥ 35 weeks gestation

Where GBS is requested but the above have not been fulfilled the following comment will go out with the report:

“Screening for GBS carriage in pregnancy is performed only on a recto-vaginal swab collected at ≥ 35 weeks gestation.”

This is in line with the recommendations of the NZ Consensus Working Party and the NZ College of Midwives

Please contact Dr Antje Van der Linden (Phone (03) 470 2920, email: antje.vanderLinden@sclabs.co.nz) or Dr James Ussher (Phone (03) 470 2924, email: james.ussher@sclabs.co.nz) if you would like to discuss this further.

REPORTING OF RESULTS

Patient Privacy

An article in the latest 'NZ Doctor' addresses the perennial problem of results being sent to the wrong location, particularly in the case of locums working at multiple locations. The easiest and most reliable way to overcome this is to always put your laboratory code (which is different if you have different locations) on the request form. If you generate your own order forms out of Med Tech this code can be added electronically. If you do not know your code(s) please contact douglas.fraser@sclabs.co.nz

Copies to Patients

SCL and Medlab patients who request a copy of their own results are now given the option of getting these results by email. Patients will complete and sign a release form at the time of specimen collection and will be given a copy with their laboratory number attached. The laboratory barcode number then acts as the password for the encrypted e-mail that is released.

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION

There have been a number of instances lately of referrers either ringing to say the sample they sent is not actually from that patient, or sending a form with one patient's details with samples labelled for another patient. With the exception of precious samples which cannot be recollected such samples are discarded. In the case of precious samples we require a disclaimer from the referrer as we can take no responsibility for the results. If the sample has already been processed the results are backed out of the system and a comment added. All this is time consuming for all parties and there is always the worry that there are other errors we are unaware of and which have the potential to do harm to the patient. We have evidence of patients being admitted and / or treated on the basis of results that did not belong to them

Correct patient identification requires the following:

- Take the labelled request form to the patient
- Positively ID the patient by asking for their name and DOB
- Never ask the patient to confirm details
- If the patient is unable to provide details these should be obtained from the caregiver or a relative, we advise our own staff to note down the details of the person who provided the identification
- Label the tubes at the patient's side

In most instances the laboratory will not detect the error unless results have changed markedly, or the referrer phones for results on a patient and we haven't any record of receiving the specimen

REFERRAL RIGHTS

Under the terms of our contract referrals can be accepted from the following:

- Medical Practitioners
- Oral Maxillofacial Surgeons who hold a medical qualification
- Nurse Practitioners (defined test list)
- Midwives (defined test list)
- Smear takers (Cervical smears and associated swabs only)

We are not funded for requests for nursing or allied health staff. This means that referrals from Nursing Homes and Community Nurse Clinics must be in the name of the Doctor who has oversight.

PERIPHERAL FNA CLINICS

Following a period of consultation FNA Clinics are no longer being offered in Queenstown, Dunstan and Oamaru. For a variety of reasons very few instances of significant pathology are now being seen in these clinics, and a significant – and increasing – number of patients are being discharged from the clinics without a sample being taken. Potential malignancies are also being referred straight into specialist care.

The time between clinics has also meant that any truly urgent cases have been referred through to the service in Dunedin; this service will continue to operate Mon-Fri and patients can normally be seen within 24 hours.

Jan Parker COO SCL jan.parker@sclabs.co.nz

If you would prefer an electronic copy of newsletters please email me at the address above. Also indicate if you do not wish to receive paper copies