**Helicobacter pylori Testing: Current Recommendations**

The purpose of this clinical update is to remind laboratory requestors of our current approach to the diagnosis of *H. pylori* infection.

**The method of choice to diagnose *H. pylori* infection is faecal antigen testing**

This monoclonal antibody-based technique detects the presence of *H. pylori* antigens in a faecal sample. It has high sensitivity and specificity for diagnosis of active infection and to confirm eradication following treatment.

**Appropriate Clinical details are a pre-requisite for testing**

- Please refer to the Pathlab clinical update from December 2016 and BPAC guidelines for further details on *H. pylori* testing criteria and red flags for endoscopy referral.

**Please note the following in order to minimise false negative results with faecal antigen testing**

- Faeces need to be tested within 24 hours of collection. Therefore specimens need to be submitted well within this time-frame with the collection time clearly documented.
- Antibiotics should not be taken in the 4 weeks prior to testing. Proton pump inhibitors (PPI) and bismuth should be avoided for 2 weeks prior to testing.

**H. pylori serology will only be performed for the following reasons:**

- The clinical details on the form specifically state that the patient is unable to discontinue their PPI for 2 weeks.
- Documentation that the patient has been discussed with and approved for *H. pylori* serology by a Clinical Microbiologist or Gastroenterologist.

Please contact us if you have any questions with regards to the above.

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