

Memorandum

To: Clinical Directors
From: Stephen du Toit, Chemical Pathologist & Clinical Director Laboratory
Date: 6 March 2017

SUBJECT: Restriction of testing

Thyroid antibodies – Anti-TG will be discontinued

Currently Anti-TPO and anti-TG (Thyroglobulin) antibodies are performed by WDHB when thyroid antibodies are requested. When the Anti-TG reagent runs out, (estimated in 2 - 3 weeks time) WDHB will discontinue anti-TG antibodies.

Anti-TPO antibodies offer better performance than anti-TG antibodies. The only indication for measuring anti-TG antibodies is to check for assay interference when Thyroglobulin is measured. Thyroglobulin is mainly used as a tumour marker in the follow-up of patients with thyroid cancer. A specific assay (Roche), validated for TG measurement is required. Results from other Anti-TG assays differ dramatically and can cause confusion with interpretation of the TG result. Pathlab has already discontinued anti-TG antibodies.

PTHrp

Secretion of PTHrp is the commonest cause of tumour related hypercalcaemia. Survival times in these patients are short, often less than 2 months. Other causes of hypercalcaemia in malignancy include osteolytic metastasis, unregulated production of 1.25 OH Vitamin D and very rarely ectopic PTH production.

PTHrp may be helpful in patients with unexplained hypercalcaemia and a low/suppressed PTH but without obvious evidence of malignancy. Testing is not indicated if malignancy is present. The turnaround time for PTHrp is up to 4 months. Samples need to be collected in special tubes and require specific sample handling by the laboratory.

PTHrp will only be performed when pre-approved by a chemical pathologist and samples will only be processed during office hours.

BNP (NT-proBNP)

NT-pro BNP is a useful but expensive test, results < 35 pmol/L rule out heart failure. There are many causes of an elevated BNP. Follow-up within 2 weeks is rarely indicated.

Samples collected within 48 hours of a previous reported result will not be processed to avoid unnecessary duplication of requests. When testing is declined, a comment is added with instructions for contacting the laboratory to organise testing if testing is indicated.

Kind regards,



Stephen du Toit