Protein Electrophoresis Testing I (serum and urine)

“Faint Discrete Band” and “Equivocal Pattern”

Since March 2006, Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory has been using a protein electrophoresis testing method (capillary zone) with a much higher resolution than traditional gel based methods. As a result, subtle abnormalities of uncertain clinical significance (which had not been easily seen with the older method) have been reported as either “Faint Discrete Band” or “Equivocal Pattern” depending on the degree of atypicality. They are real findings that may represent normal variation in immunoglobulin distribution or transient paraproteins associated with underlying disease or comorbidity such as, but not limited to, acute/chronic inflammatory process, connective tissue disease, or lymphoproliferative disorder.

We strongly recommend clinical correlation (History, Physical and Clinical impression) with these laboratory findings to determine follow-up management such as, but not limited to:

1) Repeat serum protein electrophoresis testing
2) Additional testing (serum immunofixation, serum free light chain assay and/or urine protein electrophoresis and immunofixation)

OR 3) Specialist consultation

Revised interpretive comments will be forthcoming. Please contact Dr. David Alter via email to David.Alter@spectrumhealth.org for associated questions.

Chemistry Department News – New Testing Added

Quantitative Hepatitis B Surface Antibody and Rubella IgG Antibody Tests

The Laboratory now has available separate orderables for reporting of quantitative results for the Hepatitis B Surface Antibody Quantitative and Rubella IgG Antibody Quantitative tests.

These tests should be ordered ONLY where quantitative antibody levels are requested by outside institutions for documentation of immunity status of students, employees, etc. They should NOT be ordered in any other situations. The standard (non quantitative) Hepatitis B Surface Antibody and Rubella IgG Antibody tests should be ordered for all routine diagnostic or immune status documentation purposes.

The immunity (protective antibody level) criteria for the standard qualitative Hepatitis B Surface Antibody and Rubella IgG Antibody tests are based on WHO (World Health Organization) standards, and have been approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). There is no established scientific evidence that quantitative antibody levels are any more predictive of immune status than are standard qualitative antibody test results. Spectrum Health does not require quantitative antibody testing for its own employees.

Any questions concerning the quantitative Hepatitis B Surface Antibody and Rubella IgG Antibody tests may be directed to Dr. Richard Horvitz in the Pathology Department at (616) 267-2785 or richard.horvitz@spectrumhealth.org.
Microbiology Department News

Clostridium difficile Toxin, PCR testing – Antimicrobial Stewardship

In an effort to increase quality of care for our patients and decrease the overuse of antibiotics, the Microbiology Department in conjunction with Infectious Disease recommends when Clostridium difficile Toxin, PCR (“C-diff”) testing is ordered, only liquid stools (i.e. watery) should be sent to the Laboratory. Any formed or soft stools will be rejected and testing will be canceled.

New Microbiology Quick Guide Available

A new version of the Microbiology Quick Guide is now available. This document should only be used as a guide and for reference. For best practice and comprehensive collection instructions, it is recommended to check the online laboratory catalog whenever possible: http://spectrumhealth.testcatalog.org/.

Collection Guides

Flu season is coming! Make sure you know how to collect these specimens:

- How to collect: Nasopharyngeal Collection
- How to collect: Throat Swab Collection
- How to collect: eSwab Collection
- How to collect: UTM Viral Media

Test inactivation

The following tests have been discontinued:

- Bordetella pertussis, Culture [SH# 8908, EPIC#LAB10011] – please order Bordetella pertussis, PCR.
- Bordetella pertussis by DFA [SH#8428, EPIC#LAB10179] – please order Bordetella pertussis, PCR

Toxicology Department News

A new version of the Toxicology Requisition (LAB485) will be available on October 19th. On this date, we recommend that your office discards any Toxicology requisitions with a date prior to 10/2015. Please order new requisitions using the Laboratory Supply Order Form and submitting via the fax number on the form.

New Laboratory Supply Order Form

A new version of the Laboratory Supply Order Form will be available on October 14th. On this date we recommend that your office discards any Laboratory Supply Order Forms with a date prior to 10/2015. Please order new forms using either an old version of the form or by printing out the form in the link above and submitting via the fax number on the form.

Compliance

Do It Right! Label On Site!

In our ongoing effort to increase patient safety, we are asking that all specimens be labeled and to also include perfect patient identification of all specimens. What is “perfect patient identification”? It is including 2 patient identifiers, usually a patient’s full name (first and last name) and date of birth (DOB), on both the specimen and the order.

On September 1, 2015, Spectrum Health Regional Laboratory (35 Michigan, Main Laboratory, Grand Rapids) began participating in a Grand Rapids Hospital-wide project to promote proper identification of all specimens from collectors. We expect from the collectors, the patient’s full name and date of birth (or Spectrum Health Medical Record Number, MRN) for all specimens to help protect our inpatients. This has been extended to our outpatient collectors as well. If 2 patient identifiers are not used on the specimen, your order will be cancelled and a request for recollection will be made.

Using a single identifier is not acceptable and will cause delays in results. Help us protect the patients and always label the specimen with 2 identifiers!