

Pathology News



An NHS partnership providing a highly dependable, clinically assured and cost effective diagnostic pathology service



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Dear colleague, I would like to introduce myself to you as the new Interim Manager Director for South West London Pathology (SWLP). Saghar Missaghian-Cully, SWLP's previous Managing Director left SWLP in October to take up a regional role at NHS Improvement.

My role will be to lead the organisation for the next six months while a permanent Managing Director is recruited. Many of you will already know me as I have been involved in a consultant capacity with SWLP since its inception.

I know that Saghar informed you in the last newsletter that Dr Aodhan Breathnach was stepping down as Medical Director. I'm pleased to inform you that Dr Tim Planche has been appointed the new Medical Director. Tim was SWLP's Clinical Lead for Microbiology since 2014 and has been a microbiologist at St George's Hospital for many years. Tim was appointed Medical Director in October and his leadership, experience and skills will be a fantastic addition to the team.

Saghar and Aodhan were both instrumental in bringing the three hospital pathology departments together, growing the organisation and raising the stature of SWLP. They left the organisation in a strong position and I'm delighted to have this opportunity to ensure the ambitious plans for SWLP are on track and move forwards.

Over the next six months one of the priorities I will be working on with Tim is to ensure we focus on providing our GPs and practice managers with more opportunities to find out about our services and how we can support you more effectively using our clinical expertise.

A number of education sessions have taken place over the past year which have had excellent feedback. Tim and I are both very keen to implement further events and attend relevant meetings (particularly clinical ones) already in place with partner organisations for example CCG meetings and local medical committee meetings. We both want to ensure we maintain close ties with those relying on us for our clinical expertise and ensuring we add value wherever we can.

The aim of this newsletter will remain the same – to provide you with information on upcoming changes to our services and how they will affect you. These include both operational issues and clinical updates.

Tim and I both look forward to working with you and, as always, we welcome feedback - if you have anything you would like to share with us please email us at stgh-tr.SWLPcomms@nhs.net



Simon Brewer
Interim Managing Director



Dr Tim Planche
Medical Director

SERVICE UPDATES

Missed Collections - Reminder

If a courier comes to your surgery and does not collect samples or if the courier does not visit your surgery as planned please **DO NOT** store any samples at your surgery for the courier to collect the following day.

Please contact us immediately to arrange an adhoc collection on 0208 266 6510 between the hours of 8am - 8pm.

Collections and deliveries during the Christmas period

The laboratories will run a normal service over the Christmas period.

On Bank holiday dates there will be no collections or deliveries for GP surgeries - Christmas day (Monday 25 December), Boxing day (Tuesday 26 December) and New Year's Day (Monday 1 January 2018).

If you have any enquiries about the Christmas holiday dates please contact us on 0208 266 6510.

Urine collection for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea tests

Our laboratories are still receiving incorrect sample containers for urine for chlamydia and gonorrhoea (CTGC) screens. If samples arrive in incorrect containers the samples have to be discarded. The universal container should not be used as it does not contain the relevant buffers and additives that ensure sample stability.

Please ensure you use the Cobas PCR tube which enables us to store samples reliably for longer without risking sample degradation and potential false negatives.

Universal container



Chlamydia/GC urine sample kit
Cobas PCR



Microbiology Urine samples - use boric acid containers



Microbiology will **ONLY** accept boric acid containers for urine investigations. Please see example of a red-top containers that contain boric acid (left). This is to ensure that we provide a quality result to end users. Boric acid containers also require a minimal fill as indicated on the side of the containers. Urines received that do NOT comply with this will be rejected.

The only **EXCEPTION** is for paediatric samples where insufficient volume of urine may be obtained. In such cases a white top-universal will be accepted.

Requesting Blood Science and Immunology Tests

The number of requests received by Clinical Blood Sciences and Immunology departments using 'Downtime' request forms is increasing significantly.

These forms are designed specifically to be used when your electronic systems are not available, therefore we should only be receiving a small number of them. The use of these forms greatly increases the risk of mistakes being made either with the patient identification or with the tests requested as well as increasing the time taken to enter the request details. Most of the requests should now be made using electronic systems.

Please forward this information on to all your staff who request tests from these departments

Changes to malaria processing

Any sample for malaria screening which is more than 6 hours old upon arrival at the laboratory is unsuitable for preparation and staining of blood films due to potential degradation of parasites.

In this instance only a rapid diagnostic test will be performed which has important limitations. The tests are highly specific for *P. falciparum* infections and *P. vivax* infections and they are extremely limited in their detection of *P. ovale*, *P. malariae* and *P. knowlesi* infections.

Please note that patients can remain positive for *P. falciparum* during treatment, and immediately post treatment for malaria.

In cases where there is a high suspicion of malaria infection please ask patients to be bled at Kingston, St George's or Croydon hospital to avoid diagnostic delays.

Croydon GPs

Semen Analysis - for infertility and post-vasectomy

In the last edition of the pathology newsletter we informed you that there was a change to semen analysis process.

This information has now been updated to version 3 and replaces version 2.1. Changes include semen delivery to laboratory within 30 minutes in order for processing to start within 1 hour of sample production.

The updated instruction leaflet is available when ordering the semen analysis pack which can be downloaded from the pathology consumables website (located under Pathology/Forms bags section). If you are a GP from Croydon please click on the semen analysis item that says 'Croydon GPs only'.

Patient Leaflet - Semen Analysis (version 3)

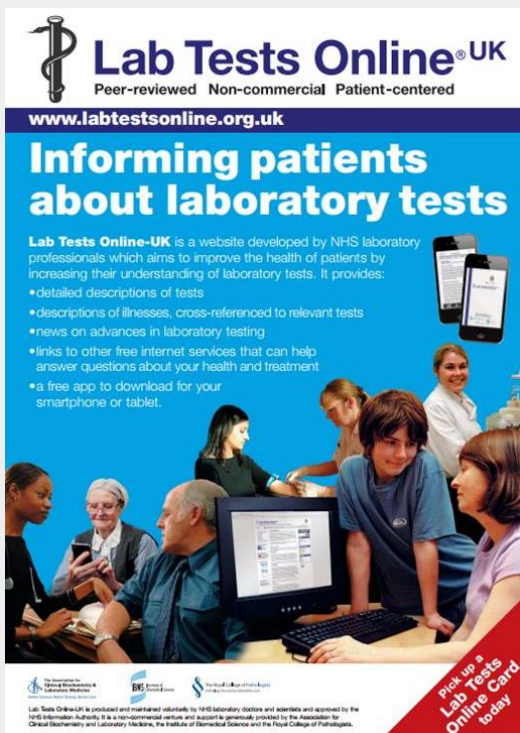
Providing results directly to patients

Our Cytology dept and Immunology departments are receiving an increased number of telephone calls directly from patients requesting details about their test results. Laboratory staff are not authorised to give results directly to patients and are not able to provide any confidential information. This can often be difficult for laboratory staff to deal with and very frustrating for any patients phoning expecting to receive their tests results.

If you do provide any pathology reports to your patients please ensure you delete the laboratory numbers from the report first.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Lab Tests Online - labtestsonline.org.uk



Lab Tests Online[®]UK
Peer-reviewed Non-commercial Patient-centered

www.labtestsonline.org.uk

Informing patients about laboratory tests

Lab Tests Online-UK is a website developed by NHS laboratory professionals which aims to improve the health of patients by increasing their understanding of laboratory tests. It provides:

- detailed descriptions of tests
- descriptions of illnesses, cross-referenced to relevant tests
- news on advances in laboratory testing
- links to other free internet services that can help answer questions about your health and treatment
- a free app to download for your smartphone or tablet.

Pick up a Lab Tests Online Card today

Lab Tests Online-UK is produced and maintained voluntarily by NHS laboratory doctors and scientists and is approved by the NHS Information Authority. It is a non-commercial website and subject to general access provided by the Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine, the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists.

Lab Tests Online UK is designed to help patients understand laboratory tests.

Patients and their carers will find simple explanations and answers to their questions about laboratory tests whether they are from clinical biochemistry, haematology, microbiology, immunology, cytopathology or histopathology.

Lab Tests Online UK is an initiative of the Association of Clinical Biochemistry, produced by laboratory professionals and approved by the NHS Information Authority. The site has been endorsed by the Royal College of Pathologists and the Department of Health and is recommended by NHS Choices.

It is cited on many hospital pathology websites (including South West London Pathology). It is described as 'the single most authoritative source of information about laboratory tests on the web'.

Visit www.labtestsonline.org.uk

Key performance indicators

We will now be providing you with key performance indicators for the following tests:

- Full Blood Count
- Potassium
- Thyroid Stimulating Hormone
- Urine Microscopy and Screen

We process hundreds of tests but these are some of the most common tests processed in our laboratories.

Key performance Indicators: August - October 2017

Results Line - Reminder



There is a telephone number for results and enquiries for all GPs.

Results are available for all our GPs regardless of where you are located. Please ring this number for results rather than your local hospital.

You can obtain results for Clinical Blood Sciences (Chemistry, Haematology and Immunology) and Microbiology.

0208 725 5468

Contact Us

If you wish to contact us with regards to any aspect of our service, please use the email address below. We will ensure it is logged, investigated and resolved.

We are keen to work with all those using our services to ensure our service meets your requirements and expectations.

Please use our secure NHS.net email address to raise any specific points as this will help us address the details at individual patient level.

Please provide the following information:

- Patient's NHS number
- Date of test
- Name of test
- The name of your GP surgery

Email address: stgh-tr.SWLPcomms@nhs.net

There are also [contact telephone numbers](#) on our website for clinical advice, enquiries and transport.

CLINICAL UPDATES

Changes to PSA age related reference ranges

The Pan London suspected cancer referral guide for Urology published in April 2016 included age related PSA thresholds recommended by the British Association of Urologists (BAUS). These cut offs were slightly different to those being reported by our labs in SWLP.

After discussion with the urologists at Kingston, Croydon and St. George's hospitals it was agreed that we should change our PSA age related cut offs to those recommended by BAUS.

Since November 2017* PSA results have been reported using the BAUS age related cut offs as follows:

AGE (years)	PSA value (ug/L)
18-49	2.7
50-59	3.9
60-69	5.0
70-79	7.2
80-84	10.0
85+	20.0

A referral using a suspected cancer pathway (for an appointment within 2 weeks) is recommended for all men with a PSA above the age-specific threshold even in the presence of a urinary infection. For patients with an increasing PSA level that remains below BAUS age-specific threshold there is no evidence that a suspected cancer referral is required. Where the result is just below the age-specific threshold, you should consider repeating the PSA test after one month.

Reference: Pan London Suspected Cancer Referral Guidelines for Urology

*This date is a change to that previously given on reports - August 2017

High Prolactin Levels

Changes to reporting of macroprolactin results

Prolactin measured in serum is made up of several different forms. The biologically active form of prolactin is the 23-kDa monomeric polypeptide secreted by the pituitary gland; however, circulating prolactin exists in a number of additional forms, including macroprolactin (150 kDa). The latter may be present in serum in varying quantities and can

cause apparent hyperprolactinemia. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the bioactive monomeric prolactin from macroprolactin to avoid diagnostic confusion and inappropriate treatment.

Samples with prolactin levels of >700 mU/L (first finding) are routinely tested for the presence of macroprolactin. Previously we have reported macroprolactin results as 'present' or 'not detected'. We are moving to reporting estimated monomeric bioactive prolactin, since macroprolactin and a raised monomeric prolactin concentration may co-exist. Estimated monomeric prolactin results will be reported as normal or raised, according to gender-specific reference ranges. Further interpretative comments may then be added by the Duty Biochemist, according to the degree of monomeric prolactin elevation.

Please contact the Biochemistry laboratory if you have any queries regarding this change.



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Our mailing address is:
stgh-tr.SWLPcomms@nhs.net