



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 1, 2009

To: All Manitoba Physicians sending specimens to DSM Clinical Microbiology Labs

From: Dr. Michelle Alfa, Medical Director,
Clinical Microbiology Discipline, Diagnostic Services of Manitoba (DSM)
Michelle J. Alfa

cc: Dr. Paul Van Caesele, Director Cadham Provincial Laboratory

Re: Testing for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* from genital sites in adults

The current standard of care for evaluation of sexually transmitted infections or other STIs (see website: www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti) in both males and females for *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* is to collect a genital sample (or urines for males) and submit this for nucleic acid testing. See Canadian Guidelines on STI 2006 "for specimen collection on non-genital sites." The current nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) method that is used by the Cadham Provincial Laboratory (CPL) provides excellent sensitivity and specificity and since it is based on amplification of nucleic acid material, transit issues especially from rural sites, have less effect on this test method compared to culture approaches for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*.

It should be noted that there are two DSM sentinel sites in the Province of Manitoba that will continue to send genital samples for culture for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in addition to the CPL NAAT test. These sentinel sites are the Microbiology lab in Thompson, MB and the Westman Regional Laboratory (WRL) in Brandon, MB (for WRL only clinics within the Brandon city will be accepted for culture). These sentinel sites provide isolates of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* to the Cadham Provincial Laboratory so that antimicrobial resistance can be monitored in this province. All other clinics and healthcare facilities submitting samples to evaluate sexually transmitted infections in males and females should submit samples for NAAT only. It should be noted that one Aptima swab for NAAT can be tested for both *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. If testing is being done because of gonorrhoeae treatment failure, then both NAAT & *N. gonorrhoeae* culture should be done (to detect if *N. gonorrhoeae* has developed antibiotic resistance).

Take Home Message: For STI workup of genital tract specimens from males and females for *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae* only submit genital sample for NAAT (i.e. NO culture for *N. gonorrhoeae* unless treatment failure is suspected then both NAAT and culture should be done). Note: Only practitioners in Thompson and Brandon would continue to submit routine genital samples for *N. gonorrhoeae* culture as well as NAAT.

Your help in ensuring the appropriate specimens are collected for STI evaluations is appreciated.

The following websites are useful:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada Guidelines for more in depth details on specimen collection, management & treatment for STIs (website: www.publichealth.gc.ca/sti)
2. CPL Guide to Services (website: www.gov.mb.ca/health/public/health/cpl)
3. DSM website (<http://www.dsmanitoba.ca/>) [Select "Info. For Professionals," then select "LIM"]

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 237-2105 or malfa@sbgh.mb.ca.