
Date: April 22, 2019
To: Edmonton and North Zone Physicians
From: Alberta Public Laboratories (APL) and DynaLIFE Medical Labs
Re: ANA Testing Recommendations

PLEASE POST OR DISTRIBUTE AS WIDELY AS APPROPRIATE

Key Message:

- The clinical utility of Anti-Nuclear Antibody (ANA) testing depends on selective identification of patients with a high pre-test probability of autoimmune rheumatic disease
- ANA cannot be used to monitor disease progression and should not be repeated once a diagnosis is made
- The presence of ANAs (i.e. positive result) does not necessarily mean disease is present

Background:

- ANA testing lacks specificity due to the high incidence of positive results found in the general population in the absence of clinical rheumatologic disease. The incidence of positive results increases with age and is higher in females. Positive results can be associated with chronic infections, subacute bacterial infections, other autoimmune conditions in which the ANA is not diagnostic (e.g. type 1 diabetes mellitus), and even in 5-10% of healthy individuals.
- The low specificity (~50%) for Systemic Autoimmune Rheumatic Diseases (SARD) can lead to low clinical utility and predictive value of ANA tests, despite the high prevalence of positive results in these diseases. A positive ANA in a patient with a low pre-test probability of SARD can be misleading and result in unnecessary follow-up and referral. Increasing the pre-test probability through identification of relevant clinical presentations will improve the predictive value of the result.

Action Required:

Request ANA testing on the Chemistry Specialty Requisition. This requisition can be obtained from the Alberta Public Laboratories or DynaLIFE websites or by request at 780-451-3702 or 780-407-7484 or at the following link: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-ch-0311.pdf>

Ordering guidelines listed below have been listed on this requisition to aid appropriate ordering.

At least two of the following items should be identified:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> photosensitive ("lupus") rash | <input type="checkbox"/> seizures or psychosis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inflammatory arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Raynaud's phenomenon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> myositis | <input type="checkbox"/> scleroderma skin changes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> oral ulcers | <input type="checkbox"/> alopecia areata |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pleurisy or pericarditis | <input type="checkbox"/> sicca (dry mouth/dry eyes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> glomerulonephritis | <input type="checkbox"/> suspected juvenile arthritis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hemolytic anemia, thrombocytopenia,
neutropenia, or lymphopenia | |

Please see the flyer on page 2 regarding upcoming CE session "Autoimmune Disease: What the lab results are really telling you"

Inquiries and feedback may be directed to:

Dr Connie Prosser, Clinical Biochemist, APL, 780-407-8492
Dr Barry Kyle, Clinical Biochemist, DynaLIFE, 780-451-3702

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr Michael Mengel, North Sector Medical Director, Alberta Public Laboratories (APL)

Dr Raymond Lai, Medical Director, DynaLIFE

Systemic Autoimmune Diseases: What the lab results are really telling you

Departments of Laboratory Medicine and Rheumatology
Faculty of Medicine

Saturday May 25, 2019 2:00 – 4:00 PM

WMC Classroom D [University of Alberta Hospital]

Speakers:

Dr Jan Willem Cohen Tervaert

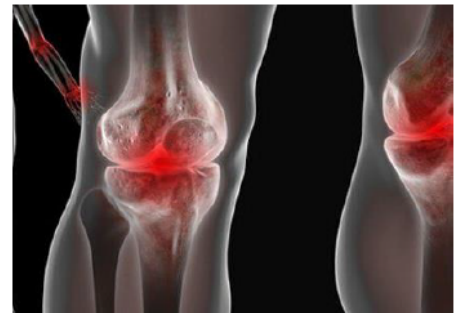
Professor and Chair, Department of Rheumatology

Dr Connie Prosser

Clinical Professor and Clinical Biochemist, Department of Laboratory Medicine

Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the data supporting the recent recommendations for ordering ANA tests
2. To recognize the potential negative impact of positive results not associated with autoimmune disease
3. To discuss testing strategies for markers of autoimmune disease



RSVP (for catering only)
Connie.prosser@ualberta.ca

Bring your Questions