

Date: November 28, 2013

To: South Zone, Central Zone, Edmonton Zone and North Zone
Physicians, Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: AHS Laboratory Services

Re: Province Wide Testing for Biliary Atresia

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Key Messages:

- By the end of 2013, all requests for Bilirubin testing on children between the ages of 7 days and 5 months less a day will be tested to enable, if required, the assessment of the risk for Biliary Atresia.
- If the Total or Neonatal Bilirubin result is greater than 20 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, additional testing will be done automatically by the laboratory.

Why this is important:

Biliary Atresia is a condition which, if left untreated, typically results in death by the age of 2 years. Biliary Atresia has an incidence of 1 in 18,000 live births in Alberta. If detected early, surgical intervention, the Kasai procedure, may be performed. To be maximally effective, this surgery must be performed before the patient is 60 days of age. A liver transplant may be needed if the Kasai procedure is not effective.

Reporting:

- For children between the ages of 7 days and 5 months less a day, if the Total or Neonatal Bilirubin result is greater than 20 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, the results for Direct (Conjugated) Bilirubin **and** the percentage of Direct (Conjugated) Bilirubin will also be reported.

The following comment will be appended to the results when the percentage of Direct (Conjugated) Bilirubin is greater than or equal to 20%:

“In infants direct (conjugated) hyperbilirubinemia (direct (conjugated) bilirubin fraction of bilirubin greater than or equal to 20% of the total or neonatal bilirubin) is pathologic. Prompt evaluation is necessary especially to assess for Biliary Atresia. Consider referral to pediatric gastroenterologist”.

Action required:

- No action required by the ordering physician as the additional testing will be done automatically if required.

For additional questions contact:

- Trefor Higgins, Director of Clinical Biochemistry, *DynaLIFE_{Dx}* at: 780-451-3702 Ext. 8134

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

Dr. James Wesenberg, AHS Provincial Medical / Scientific Director, Laboratory Services