
Date: July 8, 2010
To: Alberta Health & Wellness, Laboratory Directors and Managers, Medical Officers of Health, MicroNet Members, STI Services (Alberta), Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Infectious Disease Physicians
From: ProvLab
Re: *Haemophilus ducreyi* (Chancroid) - Replacement of culture-based diagnostics by PCR

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Key Messages:

- Effective July 12, 2010 test requests for the detection of *Haemophilus ducreyi*, the causative agent of chancroid, will be referred to the National Microbiology Laboratory, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Culture-based diagnostics for *H. ducreyi* will be discontinued and will be replaced by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay.

Why this is important:

- Chancroid is an STI characterized by necrotizing genital ulceration which may be associated with inguinal lymphadenitis ("bubo") formation.
- *H. ducreyi* is extremely difficult to recover in culture due to the fastidious nature of this organism, requiring strict culture conditions and prolonged incubation. Detection by PCR improves the sensitivity of detection since organism viability is not required.
- In Canada, chancroid remains for now a rare infection.

Specimen & Collection:

- Dacron or cotton swab taken from the genital ulcer. This is best collected by cleansing the area by flushing with sterile physiological saline, and then collecting material from the base of the ulcer. Swab may be submitted dry, or placed into at least 1mL Universal Transport Medium (Copan).
- Aspirate of pustular material from the bubo. A bubo aspirate is obtained using needle and syringe to aspirate pustular material from the bubo. Place aspirate into a securely-closed sterile unbreakable tube.
- Hold specimen at 4°C prior to transport to ProvLab.

Turn around time:

- 7-10 days. This is similar to the 7 day TAT for culture.

For additional questions contact:

- Edmonton Site – Ph: 780-407-7121 (ask for Microbiologist on call)
- Calgary Site – Ph: 403-944-1200 (ask for Microbiologist on call)

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Marie Louie, Acting Medical Director, ProvLab