



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

November 2012

Influenza virus detection - Report on Rapid Test performance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported an evaluation of eleven commercially available, FDA-cleared rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs, MMWR Nov 2, 2012 /61(43);873-876). The study used 23 recently circulating influenza viruses (16 type A and 7 type B) with precise measurements of the nucleoprotein (NP) antigen that RIDTs detect. Each RIDT was evaluated for the ability to detect virus at multiple dilutions. The numbers of positive test results for each of the 11 RIDTs by influenza virus type and influenza A subgroup were compared. One RIDT (SAS FluAlert Influenza A, SA Scientific) did not uniformly detect influenza A 2009 pandemic (H1N1) viruses or other influenza A viruses at high concentrations. Four RIDTs detected the majority of influenza B viruses in third dilution samples, whereas only one RIDT (BD Directigen EZ Flu A+B, Becton, Dickinson and Co.) detected at least 50% of all influenza A viruses in highest dilution samples.

This study was focused on the ability of RIDTs to detect influenza virus; ie, a measurement of sensitivity. However, a more recent message from the Association of Public Health Laboratories dated Nov 9, 2012 reported that the CDC is aware of five laboratories in three different states that have experienced false-positive influenza B results with the Quidel Sofia Influenza A&B test. Quidel is aware of the problem and is working to identify and solve the issue. As sustained human-to-human transmission of influenza virus has yet to be established in California this season, RIDT users must understand that false-negative as well as false-positive results are likely to be observed. At present, the SLO Public Health Laboratory is soliciting submission of rapid-test positive specimens from patients with influenza-like illness for surveillance RT-PCR testing at no charge. See CDC report at:

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6143a3.htm?s_cid=mm6143a3_e

Multi-state investigation of fungal meningitis among patients who received epidural steroid injections.

As of November 9, 448 cases of fungal infection with 32 deaths have been reported from 19 states. 98% of cases have been reported as meningitis or other central nervous system-related infection with 10 cases of peripheral joint infection. No cases have been reported from California.

Private Insurance Billing Note:

Agencies submitting specimens to the SLO Public Health Laboratory from patients with **private insurance** are requested to provide the patient's full ADDRESS on the requisition. Private insurance carriers are denying claims that lack this information.

SLO Public Health Laboratory website <http://www.slopublichealth.org/lab>.