EMH Reference Laboratory

HERPES SIMPLEX PCR

Date: November 25th, 2008

Subject: New Methodology for Herpes Simplex Virus (Types 1 & 2)

Effective December 1st, 2008, the EMH Reference Laboratory will perform in-house testing for Herpes simplex virus (types 1 & 2) by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Herpes simplex by PCR is the preferred method for the detection of herpes simplex virus in lesions and CSF, and has replaced the herpes viral culture as the test of choice for diagnosis of herpes infections.

PCR methods detect extremely small amounts of live or inactivated viral DNA, are more sensitive than culture methods, and can be performed in as little as four hours. By contrast, viral cultures require the adequate collection and transport of live virus in order to be reliable, and can take up to 2 days to obtain results. In our own laboratory comparison study, the PCR method detected herpes simplex virus in 15% of specimens testing negative by viral culture.

Effective December 1st, 2008, Herpes Viral Culture and Direct Immunofluorescence assay (DFA) will no longer be available.

Additional test information for the new Herpes PCR test is provided in the table below:

Test Information

Test Name:	Herpes Simplex PCR	*CPT Code:*	87529 x 2
Ordering Code:	HVPCR	*Analytic Time:*	4-8 hrs
Method:	RT-PCR	*Days Performed:*	Variable based on volume, min. Tuesdays & Fridays

Result Information

Results Reported	*Reference Range*
Herpes Simplex Type 1	Negative
Herpes Simplex Type 2	Negative

Specimen Information

Specimen Type	Swab of lesion or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)
Collection Container:	M4/RT Viral Transport Media (blue cap) for swabs, sterile vial for CSF
Storage Temperature:	Refrigerate
Stability:	72 hours refrigerated
Special Instructions:	For swab collection, select and clean a fresh vesicle. Puncture the vesicle with a needle and de-roof it. With a dry swab, absorb the fluid and then roll the swab over the base of the lesion. Break off swab in M4 viral transport media tube.

For more information regarding this notice, please contact Ellen Michael at 847-612-7058 (phone) or EMICHAE@emhc.org (email).

jmh Nov-08