

February 2009

# syzygy



## Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Pertussis Serology Study

In 2009, one of the major activities of the Microbiology Department will be a prospective study evaluating the clinical application of our pertussis serology assay.

Pertussis serology is an imperfect science and the correlation between results and infection (past or present) is not well described in the literature.

The in-house assay currently used by SNP measures IgG and IgA antibodies against Pertussis Toxin (PT). We have used this assay for many years.

Although PT IgG results are not currently accepted by the public health department as evidence of acute infection, our day-to-day experience with these assays to date suggests that PT IgG is as sensitive as, if not more sensitive and specific than, PT IgA in detecting acute disease.

Our experience suggests that most patients with positive PCR have negative serology, and vice versa, suggesting that these tests play a complementary role in detection of disease at different phases of the illness.

We are conducting a prospective clinical study in 2009 to try to demonstrate the following:

- 1 The sensitivity and specificity of the PT IgG and IgA assay.
- 2 The relationship between PCR positivity for *Bordetella pertussis* and serological titres over time.

We will attempt to recruit any patient who is referred to SNP collection centres for pertussis testing who has a request for BOTH Pertussis PCR and a blood test (any blood test). No active participation by our referrers is required.

Please note that any pertussis serology ordered will be processed as normal. For tracking purposes, participating patients' reports will have Dr Meryta May added as a copy doctor.

Pertussis serology performed solely for investigative purposes will not be billed, and referring practitioners will receive a copy of the result.

We hope that the information obtained from this study will help to provide a more accurate interpretation of laboratory results for pertussis.

We aim to publish the results in a peer-reviewed journal, and will also keep you informed of our progress through *Syzygy*.

For any queries or further information, please contact Dr Meryta May on (07) 3377 8621.

## Pathologist Consultations



Dr Richard Williamson

SNP pathologists are available for consultation for both specific patient cases and general medical enquiries – call (07) 3377 8345. Alternatively, send a secure email from the SNP website. Simply log on to the doctor's member area and click on the link 'consultation request'.

To maintain patient privacy, we do not recommend that patient details be sent in an open email.

## Plan now for Warfarin Care Enrolments before Easter 2009

To ensure the safe and complete enrolment of patients into our Warfarin Care Program, we will accept new enrolment applications until 4 pm on Wednesday 1st April 2009. Enrolments will re-open Tuesday 14th April 2009 at 9 am.

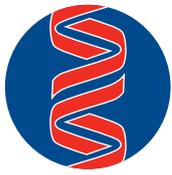
For more information about Warfarin Care, please contact our Warfarin Care team on (07) 3377 8578, or visit the 'for doctors' area at [www.snp.com.au](http://www.snp.com.au).

## Flu vaccines now in stock

SNP now have stocks of the 2009 formulation of Fluvax and Vaxigrip flu vaccines. Both are priced at \$11.66 (inc. GST). The vaccine order form is available from the secure 'for doctor's' area of the SNP website [www.snp.com.au](http://www.snp.com.au), or call the Doctor Service Centre on 1300 SNPATH (1300 767 284) for an order form to be faxed to your practice.



Comments and Feedback? Contact us at [syzygy@snp.com.au](mailto:syzygy@snp.com.au)



## Doctor's challenge

- Q1. How is pertussis diagnosed?
- Q2. What are the transportation requirements for specimens for *Bordetella pertussis* culture?
- Q3. What groups of people should be considered for chemoprophylaxis?

Hint:

1. Investigative Protocol – Treatment of *Bordetella pertussis*.
  2. Information bulletin – Pertussis (Whooping Cough fact Sheet)
- Both documents available at [www.snp.com.au](http://www.snp.com.au) in the publications menu

Answers in the next issue of *Syzygy*.

## IT tool box

We are often asked to explain the difference between PIT and HL7 formats for electronically transmitted reports. Here's a simple explanation. Each has advantages and disadvantages, so we recommend you discuss this with your software vendor to ensure you choose the best application for you.

**PIT format – Pathology Information Transfer**

The results are presented on screen in an 'easy-to-read' or 'picture' layout.

**HL7 format – Health Level 7**

Results in the file are broken into segments called atomic data. This allows the clinical software to extract and manage the data more effectively, e.g. diabetes assessments for patients, graphing cumulative results.

**HL7 PIT Encapsulated**

This format contains both the HL7 atomic data and the PIT layout. This gives you the benefit of both formats in how it is displayed and how it can be used.

## New blood tubes



### Trace elements

Blood for trace elements is now collected into blue-top EDTA tubes. These containers reduce possible contamination from metals used in the production of other blood collecting tubes, e.g. SST stoppers contain zinc.

Trace elements tubes are used for:

Aluminium, Zinc, Strontium, Selenium, Copper, Nickel, Cobalt, Manganese, Lead, Arsenic, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium, red cell Magnesium and red cell Zinc.

Note: Serum Magnesium is still collected in the SST tube.

### Quantiferon

Blood for Quantiferon is now collected into a set of 3 tubes. It is critical that all 3 tubes are used. These specimens are stable for longer than those collected into LiH tubes. Collect specimens Monday – Friday only. Always treat as URGENT. Specimens must reach the Taringa laboratory within 14 hours of collection. All tubes must be filled (1mL in each) and shaken vigorously. Centrifugation is not required.



## Collection Centre updates

### Brisbane – relocation

Springfield (February 2009)  
Shop 1, Orion Springfield Town Centre  
1 Main Street  
Phone (07) 3470 1994

### Opening Soon

Walloon  
Teneriffe

### Regional – relocation (February 2009)

Sippy Downs (with X-Ray and Imaging)  
Chancellor Village Business Centre  
1 Chancellor Boulevard  
Phone (07) 5459 1400



*Syzygy* – now on 100% recycled paper

Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology recognises our corporate responsibility to respect and improve the environment in which we work and live. As part of our commitment to continually improve environmental performance and prevent pollution, *Syzygy* is now printed on 100% recycled paper.