

SA Pathology Newsletter December 2020

SA Pathology wins international recognition for COVID-19 response



SA Pathology is one of 5 Australian health services to receive special recognition by the International Hospital Federation's (IHF) Beyond the Call of Duty for COVID-19 response recognition program.

SA Pathology developed new tests and adapted testing platforms to achieve a world-leading response to the COVID-19 pandemic and we are honoured to be acknowledged for this achievement.

In response to the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic the IHF launched the 'Beyond the Call of Duty for COVID-19 Response Recognition Programme' to acknowledge actions and responses of hospitals and health service providers around the world that went 'beyond the call of duty'. With a mission to support performance improvement, this recognition is provided to hospitals and health service providers which proactively put in place outstanding and innovative organisational responses or actions in facing the COVID-19 pandemic in their region or country.

'In what has been a challenging year across the globe, SA Pathology has proudly

delivered the quality pathology testing that has enabled the South Australian government's world-class response to the pandemic. Our remit has always been to serve our community and improve the health of all South Australians, and we are honoured to be recognised internationally for this work,' said Dr Tom Dodd, Clinical Service Director SA Pathology and Mark McNamara, Executive Director SA Pathology, in a joint statement.

Congratulations to everyone involved, in particular our Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Directorate (MID) team. And a special mention to all staff who were involved in the quick establishment of drive-through testing centres and the enormous ramp-up effort in Data Order Entry (DOE) and those who volunteered to cover workloads to enable this world-leading initiative.

The recognised organisations were announced on 15 December 2020. Read the full list [here](#).



SA Pathology's Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Directorate (MID) virology team:
L-R: Geoff Higgins, Ivan Bastian, Mark Turra, Terry Anninos

Becton Dickinson (BD) consumables transition

Equip. Cat	Manufacturer/Type	Model	Reference
1	Becton Dickinson	ADULT BLOOD COLLECTION TUBES	BD361
2	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD COLLECTION NEEDLES	BD304
3	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD COLLECTION HOLDERS	BD305
4	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD TRANSFER DEVICES	BD306
5	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD COLLECTION TUBES	BD362
6	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD COLLECTION NEEDLES	BD307
7	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD COLLECTION HOLDERS	BD308
8	Becton Dickinson	BLOOD TRANSFER DEVICES	BD309

SA Pathology will be transitioning to a new supplier, Becton Dickinson (BD), for the following pathology collection consumables:

- adult blood collection tubes
- blood collection needles, holders and transfer devices.

BD Consumables won a tender earlier in the year and the rollout of new phlebotomy consumables will commence in January 2021.

SA Pathology is the lead agency for implementation and will work collaboratively with BD clinical educators in ensuring the training of relevant staff.



SA Pathology | KWP! Survey



Please help us improve our website

SA Pathology's ongoing strategy is to improve our service delivery to all of our patients, customers and stakeholders, which includes ensuring our website provides the information you need.

As part of this work, we are partnering with KWP! to better understand these needs and we would appreciate your feedback in taking the time to complete a brief survey which will be an invaluable contribution to our website redevelopment project. It should only take 2 to 3 minutes to complete.

There is an option to discuss your feedback further with KWP! if you agree to follow-up contact.

Thank you in advance for your time and we look forward to receiving your survey response.

Please find the survey [here](#).

SAMSAS update

The South Australian Maternal Serum Antenatal Screening (SAMSAS) program continues to improve our maternal serum screening service for our patients. We have made a number of changes, described below:

Screening window

Blood can be collected for first trimester screening, from 9 to 14 weeks (9w0d to 14w0d) inclusive. Second trimester screening begins from 14 weeks and 1 day and ends at 20 weeks and 6 days (14w1d-20w6d). Accurate assignment of gestational age is critically important as the concentrations of the measured analytes change throughout pregnancy and small changes can result in large changes in the final risk assessment.

Ethnicity

Patient ethnicity contributes to the SAMSAS screening algorithm used to generate the risk assessment. To align with SA Health guidelines, SAMSAS has combined South Asian and Oriental ethnic groups to "Asian". We have also updated the term Afro-Caribbean to African-Caribbean.

Biochemical only risk assessment

The SAMSAS program makes every effort to deliver an optimal risk assessment utilising biochemical measurements and nuchal translucency (NT). However, if the laboratory has not received an ultrasound report for NT measurement by 14 weeks gestation, SAMSAS will issue a suboptimal biochemical only risk assessment.

Omega-3 status test for prematurity risk

The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) will be partnering with SAMSAS to offer omega-3 first trimester screening from 2021 for women with singleton pregnancies. This will identify women who can benefit from omega-3 supplementation to reduce their risk of early birth. Updated National Health and Medical Research Council National Pregnancy Care guidelines will recommend assessing omega-3 status and supplementing pregnant women with low omega-3 intakes. The SAMSAS-SAHMRI collaboration, under a memorandum of understanding agreement, will evaluate the feasibility and uptake of the omega-3 screening using residual samples from the SAMSAS, with the test listed as an option on a new SAMSAS request form.

If you have any clinical enquiries please contact Dr Richard Mackay, Pathologist on 08 8161 8742, from 4 January 2021. For scientific matters, contact Enzo Ranieri, Head of Biochemical Genetics on 08 8161 6739 or 0466 153 257, enzo.ranieri@sa.gov.au

Resumption of tests in the Microbiology Infectious Diseases (MID) Directorate

On Friday 11 December SA Pathology resumed standard enteric molecular tests for bacterial, viral and parasitic infections in all patient groups following a review of SARS-COV-2 testing demands and capacity within the MID Directorate.

The multiplex respiratory viral PCR (RVP) test will also be available for requests from community-based respiratory clinics in addition to 'hospital-associated' patients (inpatients, emergency department presentations and hospital out-patient clinics).

Following these resumptions, MID Directorate will provide the full business-as-usual range of tests, barring the multiplex RVP test for general practitioner (GP) requests. SA Pathology will continue to review its workload, with the aim of resuming GP requested RVP tests, and we will inform you prior to the resumption of testing.

SA Pathology appreciates your understanding as our laboratory responded to the recent COVID-19 cluster.

Please contact the on-call clinical microbiology consultant on 8222 3000 if you have any queries regarding the resumption of these services.

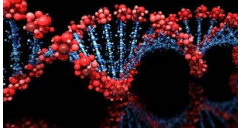
Changes to therapeutic range for phenobarbital

From 23 December 2020, SA Pathology's therapeutic range for phenobarbital, otherwise known as phenobarbitone, has changed as follows:

- ≤28 days age 45-130 µmol/L
- >28 days age 45-170 µmol/L

This change aligns with best practice guidelines for antiepileptic drugs, produced by the Commission on Therapeutic Strategies.

Genetics test provides much needed answers



One phone call has opened the door for a young patient with epilepsy and Autism Spectrum Disorder to access vital genetic testing under the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS).

Lachlan's mother recently contacted SA Pathology asking for information about accessing genetic testing and the testing process. After discussing her son's medical situation, Tristan Hardy in SA Pathology's Genetics and Molecular Pathology directorate identified the young lad as a prime candidate for trio exome testing, but with his 10th birthday coming up in early 2021, time to access the testing under the MBS was running out.

With parental consent, Tristan consulted with Lachlan's treating paediatrician and explained the process that will ensure he receives clinical genetics approval to undertake testing under the MBS. He also arranged for Lachlan's DNA to be stored at SA Pathology until testing can proceed.

For more information on genetic testing, please call us on 8222 3000.

Christmas message



During what has been a challenging year we would like to thank the medical community who continue to support SA Pathology and enable us to deliver world-class public pathology services to the state of South Australia.

We wish you all a very happy, restful and safe Christmas and New Year.

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

SA Pathology has been at the forefront of the response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Our team of dedicated clinicians, scientists, technicians, nurses and support staff are working 24/7 to ensure the health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

Visit our COVID-19 webpage to find the latest information, health updates and resources on COVID-19.

[Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

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