
New strain *Chlamydia trachomatis* not detected by Hologic Aptima assay

Friday 12th July 2019

There have been recent reports from Europe of a circulating *C. trachomatis* variant with a mutation in the 23S rRNA gene allowing it to escape detection by the Aptima Combo 2 CT/NG assay. This strain accounts for 6-10% of *C. trachomatis* positive cases in Finland, has also been detected in Sweden, and prevalence in other European countries is currently under investigation following a recommendation from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

It is unknown whether this variant is circulating in other areas of the world, including New Zealand. There is significant travel between Europe and New Zealand. We frequently see sexually transmitted infections in short term visitors, for example in Queenstown. Therefore, there is ongoing risk of importation of this new *C. trachomatis* variant.

Laboratory response

We are communicating with Hologic, the manufacturers of our assay, about the situation. They are working on changing the assay so that it will detect this variant. We are also considering doing extra testing, using a different assay, on up to 1000 requests to see if we are missing CT positive cases.

How you can help

If your patients/clients have recently travelled in Europe please signal this on the request form. In addition, if your patient/client presents with urethritis and is negative for STI pathogens, please let us know so that we can organise additional testing.

We will keep you informed as new information is available.

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