



Changes in Test Frequency for Systemic Autoimmune Diseases

We know that ANA/ENA results in individual patient results do not generally change with time. In the majority of cases there is no clinical value in frequent testing unless there is a suggestion of a new diagnosis. Therefore, to guide appropriate test frequency the following change will be implemented on 4 November 2013.

For diagnosis, up to two ANA and ENA tests may be performed within 6 weeks.

Disease monitoring ANA or ENA tests may then be requested once every 9 months only if clinically indicated.

anti-dsDNA (Farr assay) testing is helpful in SLE patients to monitor activity. However the test is usually only required once every 6 weeks. Even at this frequency, only a small minority of unstable patients will benefit from such close monitoring. The following change will be implemented on 4 November 2013.

For diagnosis, up to two anti-dsDNA screen tests may be performed within 6 weeks.

For disease monitoring anti-dsDNA (Farr Assay) may then be requested 6 weekly only if clinically indicated .

In all cases, patient serum will be stored for 3 months. Where there is clinical justification, testing may be requested following discussion with the Immunology department

We envision that this approach will improve the accuracy of testing systemic autoimmune diseases and any savings may contribute to an extension in the range of ENA tests able to be offered in the region. We welcome feedback from requestors on the approach outlined above.

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