

Free PSA

Wellington SCL no longer adds on Free PSA to specimens when total PSA is between 4-10ug/L [reflex testing]. Although this was done previously through Aotea Pathology, that was a local arrangement and the practice is not standard in other laboratories in New Zealand.

The intent of adding free PSA was to give extra information about the possibility of malignancy in men with increased total PSA and to help guide decisions around referral and biopsy.

The new guideline just released by the Ministry of Health makes this use of free PSA redundant, at least in primary care.

Prostate Cancer Management and Referral Guidance

<http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/prostate-cancer-management-and-referral-guidance>

In a separate document, the Ministry has recommended that requests for free PSA be restricted to specialists only, as free PSA is not included in any of the referral criteria.

In the near future Wellington SCL will be changing the format of reporting of total PSA to reflect the recommendations of the guideline. A clinical update will be issued at that time. The change of format will include stating the levels of total PSA by age group that indicate referral to a Urology Service is required.

The original recommendations of the Prostate Taskforce included that conventional age adjusted reference intervals should not be included on reports, but just the new referral levels. The reasoning was that the reference intervals represent the statistically derived central 95% of the population and are not good predictors of presence or absence of prostate cancer. That recommendation has been modified to allow the reference intervals to be included as well as the referral criteria if local opinion is that they convey useful information. Feedback on this point is welcome.

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