



New STI panel at Mater Pathology

Mater Pathology now performs a PCR panel for sexually transmitted infections which includes testing for *Trichomonas vaginalis*.

Trichomonas vaginalis, a parasite, is a common cause of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Microscopy is highly specific but insensitive for detection of *T. vaginalis* - often quoted 30-50% sensitivity - and has been widely used until now, however as under-reporting or false negative results may occur, the use of PCR for diagnosis has become more favourable.

A review of *T. vaginalis* microscopy reports at Mater Pathology over 22 months (study conducted January 2013-October 2014), revealed 41 positive results from 16642 genital specimens, i.e. 0.2%.

A study conducted July - August revealed a higher prevalence of *T. vaginalis* of 1.9% using PCR compared to microscopy. The prevalence for *Chlamydia trachomatis* and *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* was 5.3% and 0.01% respectively for the same sample size and type during this time period.

A review of scientific literature supports this finding with prevalence of *T. vaginalis* within New South Wales and Queensland reported in several studies over the last five years as between 1.4% and 4.8% using PCR and lower rates are reported using microscopy (*J. Clin. Microbiol. May 2009 vol. 47 no. 5 1358-1363* ; *Sex Transm Infect 2013;89:509-513*; *Sex Transm Infect 2010; 86:227-230*).

Currently only 8% of PCR requests for STI screening at Mater Pathology also request *T. vaginalis* PCR.

As PCR is superior to microscopy for detection of *T. vaginalis*, and can be performed on the same swabs, urine samples or ThinPrep specimens as *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae*, Mater Pathology recommends requesting PCR rather than microscopy for diagnosis of *T. vaginalis*.

How to request *T. vaginalis*:

Simply indicate **STI panel PCR** on a Mater Pathology request form to receive results for *T. vaginalis* as a panel with *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae* PCR or write *T. vaginalis* PCR on the request form.

Testing of the STI panel can be performed at the same time using the same swab, urine or ThinPrep specimens.

For additional information please refer to Mater Pathology's on-line testing resource for doctors at pathtest.mater.org.au or contact:

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