

Memorandum

To: Heads of Unit for Haematology, Rheumatology and
Emergency Medicine

CC:

From: A/Prof Sanjeev Chunilal

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Department: Director of Haematology Pathology

Subject: **Change of method for the ESR**

Date: 29/06/2023

Dear Colleagues

Monash Pathology are changing the method for ESR testing, moving from the modified Westergren method, to an automated rapid photometric test. The new test (Alifax, Test 1 and Roller 2) performs well in laboratory correlative studies against the Westergren method, and this new test platform is already in use in a number of pathology laboratories around Melbourne.

However, there have been limited clinical outcomes studies for assessing patients presenting with suspected acute major inflammatory conditions e.g. Giant Cell Arteritis (GCA), where the ESR has been an important diagnostic tool. Based on the recent ACR guidelines¹, the CRP carries equal diagnostic weight, for patients with suspected GCA.

Therefore, for the acute major inflammatory conditions, we recommend ordering a CRP as well if not already ordered, particularly if the ESR is normal/low.

The new ESR technique can be performed of an EDTA tube that would be used for an FBE. As such we will no longer require the Black Top Citrate tube to perform an ESR.

This change will come into effect on Thursday 29th June 2023.

I would be obliged if you could disseminate this through your relevant units to update your clinical staff.

Regards



A/Prof Sanjeev Chunilal
Monash Pathology

¹ Ponte C et al. Arthritis and Rheumatology. 2022;74;1881-1889