

Maize

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Susan Bonnell

From: Denise Dunn
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2005 12:33 PM
To: Susan Bonnell
Subject: DRAFT Public Notification ER PR Receptors

Susan,

Please review attached draft for Dr. Williams.

Thanks,
Denise



Denise Dunn
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(which is now part of Eastern Health)

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DRAFT

Estrogen / Progesterone Receptors

Eastern Health wishes to advise the public that they are retesting breast tissue samples on women with cancer of the breast which were stained by an immunoperoxidase staining method designed to test for estrogen and progesterone receptors on the breast tissue.

The theory is that in women who test positive for these receptors, the breast tumor is sensitive to the progesterone and estrogen hormones that women produce normally. This indicates women who would be candidates for Tamoxifen which, although not a cure for breast cancer, does effect the tumor's progression by blocking the effects of the naturally secreted hormones estrogen and progesterone. This hormone-blocking drug is used with chemotherapy, radiation therapy and surgery, which are curative procedures as part of the treatment protocol process.

The Laboratory Medicine Program of Eastern Health in St. John's was made aware that a patient who was tested for these receptors as negative in 2002, when retested in 2005 tested positive for these receptors. This led to further discussions between the leadership of the Laboratory Medicine Program and Oncologists leading to the testing of five more patients later in May who were selected by Oncologists. These individuals have also converted on retesting. In follow-up discussions, it was agreed to retest all women who tested negative in 2002 for these receptors. As results have become available, the attending physicians and patients, through their physicians, are being made aware of any new results.

The Laboratory Medicine Program was using a testing technique that was not fully automated requiring manual boiling of tissue and measuring of minute mixtures of stain up until April, 2004, which replaced a previous bioassay method for these receptors since 1997. When a fully automated system for this procedure became available, the Laboratory Medicine Program switched to this procedure in April, 2004, and this system has been promoted as being more sensitive and, as it is fully automated, would not require boiling of tissue and materials.

The percent of positive cases has been reviewed for the years proceeding 2004 and, while the percentage of positive tests appear to be in the range quoted in the literature, the Laboratory Medicine Program is concerned with the number of tests from 2002 which upon retesting have converted to positive. As a result, a decision has been made to test all negative specimens from prior years when the previous technique was used. As these results become available over the next three to four weeks, the patients' treating physician will be contacted with their results.

Eastern Health will be bringing in a consultant from outside the Province to review our immunoperoxidase staining technique and ensure all standards for this procedure are being met.