

Memorandum

To: Waikato Pathology Website
From: Chris Mansell clinical microbiologist
cc:
Date: 7 April 2016

SUBJECT: Gonococcal Culture and Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing

From 1 April 2016, culture for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* will only be available at Waikato hospital clinics. Samples for *Neisseria gonorrhoea* at the Waikato rural hospitals will be tested by PCR at Waikato Hospital lab. *N. gonorrhoea* is technically difficult to grow and requires rapid transport and inoculation to recover in culture. Special culture media are also needed and it has not been efficient to maintain this procedure at the small labs, which process only occasional specimens. PCR is more sensitive and reliable and the method is not affected by storage or transport of specimens. Culture is needed for antimicrobial susceptibility testing.

Culture and susceptibility testing is still being undertaken for surveillance purposes, on samples collected at Waikato Hospital Sexual Health Center. Resistance to ciprofloxacin has become very common, so ceftriaxone is now the first choice. However, resistance to ceftriaxone has been reported internationally and it is important to recognise when it arrives in our region. Waikato Hospital laboratory contributes data to the national and WHO regional surveillance programmes and participates in proficiency testing to assure that our results are equivalent to those from other laboratories.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to test patients with treatment failure or suspected antibiotic resistance at the rural Waikato centers. If you have such cases, please contact me or the Sexual Health Service to discuss and it may be necessary for the patient to visit Hamilton for assessment and treatment.

Antibiotic susceptibility of *N. gonorrhoeae* from the Waikato Region over the past year. n=67. Green = Susceptible, Orange = Intermediate, Red = Resistant.

