



Memo to: Healthcare Personnel
From: Alverno Clinical Laboratories, Department of Molecular Biology/Flow cytometry
Subject: **New test beginning April 22, 2008 – Varicella Zoster Virus PCR**

We are pleased to announce a new service for our healthcare providers, real-time PCR testing to detect Varicella Zoster Virus. This assay serves to complement our PCR for HSV 1 & 2 when investigating the etiology of skin lesions.

Varicella-zoster virus (VZV) causes vesicular dermal lesions which are clinically evident as varicella (primary infection) or zoster (reactivated, shingles) diseases. Reactivation of latent virus may occur (usually in adults over the age of 50) and produces vesicles that are typically confined to a single dermatome of the skin. Occasionally, post-herpetic neuralgia is associated with reactivation of VZV. Laboratory diagnosis is important for distinguishing HSV from VZV infections, as the clinical presentation of zoster can be confused with the dermal distribution produced by HSV.

The test kit is an ASR (Analyte Specific Reagent) from Roche; currently there are no FDA-approved PCR kits for VZV. An external positive control, an external negative control, and an extraction control are included in every run. Also, an internal amplification control is used for each patient.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION

Collect and submit specimen in viral transport medium (ex. swab in M4 medium). Body fluids may be submitted in a sterile container.

Unacceptable Conditions: non-sterile or leaking containers; vesicular lesions that are cleaned by using alcohol or detergents; collections with dry swabs, wooden shaft swabs, or calcium alginate swabs. These may lead to erroneous PCR results.

Specimen stability - Room Temperature: 48 hours, Refrigerated: 7 days, Frozen: 30 days

The Soft order code is **VZVPC**.

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For educational information:

<http://www.vzvfoundation.org/>

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list_varicel.htm CDC information on VZV

<http://www.mayomedicallaboratories.com/media/articles/communique/mc2831-0707.pdf> Mayo Medical Laboratory Communique on VZV and HSV PCR testing. July 2007.