



Clinical Utilization of Cardiac Biomarkers, System Standardization on NT-proBNP

Effective July 1, 2008, Integrated Regional Laboratories will discontinue offering BNP (B-type natriuretic peptide) and offer only NT-proBNP (N terminal pro-brain natriuretic peptide). This change is being accomplished in order to standardize BNP testing within the Health System.

BNP and the amino-terminal fragment of BNP (NT-proBNP) are secreted in response to mechanical or neurohormonal stimulation of the heart specifically in chronic heart failure (HF). Several recent studies have demonstrated excellent statistical correlations between BNP and NT-proBNP assays for prognosis and diagnosis in chronic heart failure with only some differences in half-lives, intra and inter-individual variability and differences in their production and renal clearance. However, their overall diagnostic and prognostic abilities appeared to be comparable in the clinical setting noting that both peptides are strong markers of chronic heart failure. There is some evidence that NT-proBNP does have a modest increase in predicted symptom-free survival for some types of HF patients. Since there is currently no direct conversion between the two assays, it is felt that this change will optimize patient care in the diagnosis and management of heart failure by standardizing to one specific assay. Note that with this methodology standardization, reference ranges for BNP will no longer be applicable. Reference ranges for NT-proBNP are:

Patients < 50 years old (M/F): < 450 pg/ml
Patients 50 - 75 years old (M/F): < 900 pg/ml
Patients >75 years old (M/F): ≤1800 pg/ml

Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please feel free to contact IRL's Medical Director, Dr. Marcelino Alvarez, or IRL's Clinical Laboratory Director, Dr. Leroy Mell.

Meet IRL's General Laboratory Clinical Director, Lee D. Mell, PHD, MBA, HCLD (ABB) CDR MSC USN

Dr. Mell comes to IRL from Bostwick Laboratories where he had technical oversight of the anatomical and clinical pathology labs, which included facilities in the US and the UK. Over the years Dr. Mell has held several technical, administrative and consultative positions in a variety of laboratory settings such as Anne Arundel Medical Center (Annapolis, MD), PathLab / LabCorp (Portsmouth, NH), Hagerstown Medical Labs (Hagerstown, MD), Holmes Regional Medical Center (Melbourne, FL), and the Naval Medical Research Institute (Bethesda, MD) where he was the Executive Officer prior to his retirement from the Navy Medical Service Corp. At IRL, Dr. Mell has technical and operational responsibility for the General Laboratory; Chemistry, Special Chemistry, Hematology, Coagulation, Urinalysis, Test Referrals and Specimen Processing departments.

Dr. Mell's educational background includes: a Ph.D. in Electro-Analytical and Clinical Chemistry from West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, a Postdoctoral Fellowship, Department of Clinical Pharmacology, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Bethesda, Maryland, a Masters in Business Administration from Frostburg State University, University of MD School System, Frostburg, MD, and a BS Degree in Chemistry with minors in Mathematics and Physics from Juniata College, Huntington, Pennsylvania.

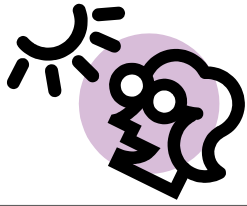
Additionally, he is currently licensed and certified as follows: American Board of Bioanalysis: Certified as CLIA High Complexity Clinical Laboratory Director. National Laboratory Certification Program: NIDA Laboratory Inspector and qualified Lab Director for NCLCP certified labs. State of Florida: Laboratory Director's License. College of American Pathologists: CAP Inspector for Forensic Urine Drug Testing and Athletic Drug Testing Laboratories; Certified Breath Alcohol Technician and Trainer by DOT. State of New York: Certificate of Qualification in Clinical Chemistry, Endocrinology and Oncology-Sera and Soluble Tumor Markers.

Dr. Mell is available to assist you with your technical questions or concerns. He can be reached at IRL's Core Lab 954-777-0018 extension 357.



DID YOU KNOW?

Copies of our State license, and Federal & CAP certificates can be found on our website: irfl.com. Just click the link, "Licenses/ Certifications" on left navigation bar.



July 2008

Hemochromatosis Awareness Month
International Group B Strep Awareness Month
UV Safety Month

Are you ready? Hurricane Preparedness & Important Contact Numbers

Hurricane Season is here—June 1 to November 30! Each year, we need to be ready for the effects of a hurricane or other severe weather. We cannot stress enough the importance of being prepared and developing a plan of action before the need for one arises. As a healthcare provider, being prepared for emergencies, such as a hurricane can reduce the anxiety, fear and major inconvenience brought on by such a situation. Listed below are important contact numbers that will be helpful to you and your staff during an emergency:

IRL Client Hotline numbers (activated ONLY during an emergency):

Physician/Client - Status Reports Only 954-486-6713

Client Services Lines - Inquiries Only 954-485-0312 or 1-866-485-0312
954-485-3462 or 1-866-485-3462

Other important community contacts:

Broward County Hurricane Hotline: 954-831-4000

Dade County Hurricane Hotline: 305-468-5900

Palm Beach County Hurricane Hotline: 561-712-6400

St. Lucie County Hurricane Hotline (EOC): 772-461-5201

TTY: 954-831-3940

American Red Cross (Broward Chapter): 954-763-9900

National Weather Service: www.nws.noaa.gov

State of Florida Emergency Management: www.floridadisaster.org

Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov

Please note: May 23rd was the deadline for providers to have acquired an NPI Number from the NPI Registry. Medicare and Medicaid require IRL to report the ordering physician's NPI and are rejecting claim files without an NPI. Other payors will soon follow.

The Role of an IRL Accessioner

When specimens arrive via courier, a methodical process is used to ensure that all specimens are removed from their transport containers and received into the IRL Meditech system. This critical role is played by the Accessioner in the IRL Specimen Processing department. Specific tasks are performed to guarantee each and every specimen received is **thoroughly reviewed and verified**:

- Specimens and the requisition are removed from a single transport bag
- Patient name and a second identifier are matched for each specimen and requisition
- Specimens are compared to the requisition to verify that an appropriate sample has been received for each test ordered
- Requisition is registered in the Laboratory information system (Meditech) by scanning the barcode and the ordered tests are entered and verified
- Bar-coded labels are generated and affixed to individual specimen tubes or containers for "reading" by the automation line and the various analyzers used to perform the testing
- Specimens are prepared for analysis (centrifuged or aliquoted if needed) and placed on the IRL automation line which transports them to the analyzers
- Following testing, specimens are routed to the Accessioning area where they are inventoried by the IRL automation system and placed in storage for a minimum of 72 hours, in case additional testing is requested

Attention to detail is the most important function of the Accessioners job. **What can you do to help with this process?** Please fold your requisitions in half with the barcode facing outward; ensure that all required information is entered on the requisition and most importantly, that all test codes are provided. To learn more on how your specimens are tested and resulted, be sure to read next months issue of *IRL INFORMS*.

ANNOUNCEMENT!

IRL is happy to announce that our entire Test Directory can now be found on the website: irfl.com by clicking "On-Line Test Directory" on the left navigation bar.

You can easily search for any test by using one of four search functions...it's that simple!

Contact us:

IRLB.IRLINFORMS@HCAHealthcare.com

For additional information on our laboratory, please visit our website at:

www.irfl.com