Sexually Transmitted Bacteria Reference Laboratory  
Health Protection Agency, 61 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5HT  

Referral of specimens for Chlamydia trachomatis culture confirmation: from patients with persistent infection

- STBRL offers a primary diagnostic service for the detection of viable C. trachomatis infection. This service is aimed at patients with persistent Chlamydia infection who have not responded to therapy.

- The Chlamydia culture service is free of charge for specimens which have been sourced from patients who have failed treatment with a first line recommended therapeutic regime (Azithromycin or Doxycycline) and have been confirmed as Chlamydia trachomatis positive at the local laboratory.

- STBRL will accept genital swabs (cervical and/or urethral) from patients fitting the above criteria. Swabs must be compatible with Chlamydia culture techniques. STBRL currently uses Copan swabs with a flocked bud which are available FOC upon request.

- In rarer instances STBRL will also accept specimens from invasive Chlamydia infection (not respiratory) and other non-genital sexual sites e.g. lymph-nodes, rectal specimens and ulcers.

- In order to preserve the viability of clinical specimens, STBRL request that following collection specimens are transported to STBRL the same day or are stored at 2-8°C and are transported to STBRL the following day. If this is not possible and a longer storage time is necessary specimens MUST be stored in the presence of a culture compatible cryoprotectant at -80°C (available FOC from STBRL).

- Upon receipt specimens will be both cultured for Chlamydia and tested using a Chlamydia specific NAAT.

- Specimens referred to STBRL for testing MUST have completed Chlamydia Culture Service Referral and Enhanced Surveillance forms enclosed with them. Both forms are available on the STBRL website.

- If you wish to use this diagnostic service please contact STBRL in advance to facilitate specimen transportation.

STBRL will aim to report results within 10 working days.

- Specimens referred for culture with insufficient referral information will not be processed and the referring laboratory will be charged.

The laboratory can be contacted by telephone (020 8327 6464) or email stbrl@hpa.org.uk