

Title Assessment of laboratory medicine procedures related to the diagnosis of schistosomiasis (bilharzia)

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Aim

The objective of this work is to assess the relevance of the update of the laboratory medicine procedures, reimbursement by the health insurance system in France, and to identify the indications for the procedures for which changes are proposed and the techniques used in the diagnosis and follow-up of schistosomiasis (bilharzia).

Conclusions and results

This work reports a homogeneity between most of the changes suggested by demand and the recommendations of the guidelines and the positions of the stakeholders. The conclusions of HAS are as follows:

With respect to serology:

- Serology plays a role in the diagnosis of schistosomiasis, in particular: 1) for the screening of autochthonous cases; 2) in the case of every migrant from an endemic area; 3) in the presence of nonspecific symptoms of schistosomiasis that are suggestive of parasitosis (eosinophilia, haematuria, fever, malaise, dry cough, myalgia, diarrhoea, etc.).
- Diagnosis is performed by testing for anti-schistosome antibodies using following methods: immunoenzymatic “ELISA” method or the indirect haemagglutination method.
- In the event of a positive result, or conflicting result if two methods were used in the first line, the serology is confirmed using the immunoblotting method “Western blot”.
- Iterative follow-up is not clinically useful.

With respect to testing for schistosome eggs:

- Testing for eggs in faeces or urine plays a role in the diagnosis of schistosomiasis (outside of the invasion phase). It is traditionally performed simultaneously with the serology.

With respect to biopsy:

- This is an invasive histopathological test that is to be limited to situations where clinical signs are present (urinary, gastrointestinal, genital) and requires a benefit-risk assessment to be performed for each individual case. It is traditionally performed in order to exclude another pathology diagnosis, for example a neoplastic condition.

Methods

The method used is an assessment procedure that involves:

- performance of a critical analysis of the literature reviews identified by a systematic literature search;
- collection of the reasoned views of the professional bodies concerned (infectious diseases, parasitology, tropical medicine, travel medicine) and of the French laboratory monitoring the epidemic in South Corsica;
- identification of the consistency between the data collected in this way (good practice guidelines and the reasoned views of professional bodies) and the demand;

this material was summarised in a proposal submitted to the HAS Board for validation.

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