

CLINICAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF A RAPID NEAR PATIENT TEST FOR INFLUENZA A AND B
ALERE



A rapid flu test which has the potential to save the NHS time, money and resource has developed its evidence base thanks to expert support from a number of our Member Organisations. It can typically take in excess of 24 hours for clinicians to obtain results where conventional lab-based testing is used. The key to effective influenza management is time - the quicker the presence or absence of flu can be confirmed, the quicker anti-viral medication may be administered, and the quicker patients may be isolated to prevent transmission to others.

In an attempt to reduce time to diagnosis, Alere has developed the Alere™ i Influenza A & B; a rapid, molecular point of care test, which generates a diagnostic result in fifteen minutes or less.

For the 2014-1025 flu season, the NIHR Diagnostic Evidence Co-operative (DEC) Newcastle and the Royal Victoria Infirmary of Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust joined forces with the Royal Hallamshire Hospital and Northern General Hospital of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to conduct a diagnostic accuracy study of the Alere-i Influenza A & B, in comparison to laboratory real-time Polymerase chain reaction (PCR). Additional data relating to prescription of antivirals and antibiotics, the use of isolation facilities, and length of patient stay, were collected to inform a budget impact model to establish the likely benefits to NHS Trusts of implementation of near patient testing for influenza.

Given the rapid result offered, it is anticipated that adoption of the Alere™ i Influenza A & B near patient test into NHS Trusts would lead to evidence-based and therefore more appropriate use of resources in terms of isolation and patient treatment. It is thought that this impact could be even greater in Trusts without laboratory facilities on site. An early positive diagnosis of influenza, in cases where bacterial infection may be suspected, could also promote and optimise antimicrobial stewardship. Initial results indicate that the implemented test can also bring about cost savings to NHS Trusts, when compared to real time-PCR.

'Working with the DEC gives access to world-leading expertise, enabling us to develop evidence beyond basic performance studies.'

Jayne Ellis, Medical Director, Western Europe and the Nordic Region for Alere

