

Laboratory for Molecular Haemato-oncology (LMH) Laboratory User's Handbook

Version number 4.4

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Issued on 06-08-2025

This handbook is intended to provide users of LMH services with information required to select and request tests, collect, label and transport samples and to request or view reports and to obtain further information or help in interpreting results. It is published via web sites as a printable Portable Document Format file and is updated periodically (typically every 6 – 12 months). Service users should be aware that copies that they print or distribute may become outdated, so they are advised to check the web site periodically. If you wish to be informed when a new edition is published, please contact the LMH Manager or Quality Manager.

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1. General Information.

South East Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service (SE-HMDS)

King's College Hospital has been a Regional Centre for diagnostic services for over 20 years, providing Immunophenotyping, Cytogenetic and Molecular Diagnostic services to haematologists; covering most of Southeast England, with populations varying from densely urban to rural with wide variations in levels of affluence and deprivation. Diagnostic laboratories embedded in the SE-HMDS are owned and managed by Synnovis LLP. The LMH laboratory provides genomics services to the South East Genomics Laboratory Hub. (SE-GLH)

There has been a steady rise in referrals (now over 17,000 samples per year) to the Synnovis laboratories at King's, from clinicians who require increasingly sophisticated and accurate haematological diagnoses, for diagnosis and disease monitoring.

Key features:

- LMH provides a wide repertoire of translocation detection, mutation screening and quantitative monitoring for Minimal Residual Disease in myeloid and lymphoid diseases.
- Post-transplant chimerism analysis with a 16 point genetic profile provides sensitive monitoring of engraftment to guide clinical intervention with DLI.
- With the publication of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on the cancer services, 'Improving Outcomes in Haematological Cancers' (IOG), King's has made the logical extension to develop the Regional Specialist Diagnostic Services as outlined in the guidance.
- This is also consistent with the Carter Report recommendations on NHS laboratory services in England with regard to building capacity and providing an enhanced level of equipment and expertise. King's has appointed four full-time SE-HMDS Consultants to develop these services and providing NICE IOG-compliant 'whole-system' integrated diagnostic and reporting processes capable of producing a final electronic integrated diagnostic report. This is achieved by developing a multidisciplinary team of specialist pathologists who provide a high-volume, rapid turn-round, integrated diagnostic service in a single centre.
- The SE-HMDS laboratories participate in the national (NHSE) whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) service.

We aim to provide:

- Efficient, comprehensive diagnostic services for haematological malignancies.
- An effective interface with clinical Haemato-Oncology services through multidisciplinary meetings (MDM).
- Research, development, evaluation and the introduction of new diagnostic techniques.
- Rapid response to technology changes and clinical needs.
- Support to clinical and epidemiological research.
- Education and training programmes for clinical and scientific staff.

1.1 SE-HMDS Laboratory for Molecular Haemato-Oncology (LMH) overview

LMH is under the management of Synnovis Group LLP. Synnovis Group LLP is a limited liability partnership between Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and SYNLAB. Synnovis Analytics and Synnovis Services sit within the Synnovis Group: the LMH Service sits within Synnovis Analytics. The corporate functions of strategy, management, finance, human resources and commercial are managed within the Synnovis Group. Synnovis Services manage the laboratory facilities, systems, equipment, consumables and maintenance. Synnovis Analytics manages the operations, diagnostics, research and development and clinical innovation.

Molecular techniques of analysis are a rapidly growing and powerful tool for identifying and quantifying molecular abnormalities/mutations for diagnosis, prognosis and monitoring of haematological malignancies. Our laboratory has developed sensitive molecular techniques for detecting and quantifying molecular markers for this routine service.

Key features:

1. LMH provides a specialist diagnostic service that is fully integrated with the South East Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service (SE-HMDS). The laboratory is committed to providing an excellent service with emphasis on quality, speed, assay development and integration of new technologies and discoveries.
2. LMH has been an accredited laboratory since 2003 and is a UKAS accredited medical laboratory No. 9597 against the ISO 15189:2012 standards in May 2018). See https://www.ukas.com/wp-content/uploads/schedule_uploads/00007/9597-Medical-Single.pdf. All work is carried out within the framework of a documented quality system.
3. The laboratory participates in accredited External Quality Assessment schemes for all tests where these exist and less formal schemes or peer-exchange schemes where they do not. Any poor EQA performance or other quality assurance non-conformances are investigated and, where appropriate, analysed to determine possible effects on the quality of results and reports. Where analysis indicates a risk of clinically significant effects, LMH will communicate and co-operate with referrers and any necessary third parties to contain risks, and will implement remedial and corrective actions.
4. Information about patients and donors is held in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information Act.
5. LMH estimates and monitors Measurement Uncertainty and other quality metrics for its tests and uses these to control and seek to improve test performance. This information, together with EQA performance data is available on request from the Laboratory or Quality Managers. Estimates of Measurement Uncertainty for tests performed on individual samples can also be provided and the laboratory, in conjunction with SE-HMDS consultants can provide advice on interpretation of results, the limitations of tests and, where appropriate, the value of repeat analysis or repeat sampling.

1.2 Where to find LMH

Postal addresses

Sample Delivery Address	Correspondence Address
LMH c/o South East Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service Synnovis Central Specimen Reception Ground Floor, Bessemer Wing King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Denmark Hill London SE5 9RS	Laboratory for Molecular Haemato-oncology The Rayne Institute King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust 123 Coldharbour Lane Camberwell London SE5 9NU

1.3 Key Personnel and Contact Details

LMH direct lines: Results Phone 020 7848 5809

Internal 772 5809

Duty Scientist email contact kch-tr.LMH@nhs.net (this is the best address to use for general enquiries)

Clinical Scientist advice: Dr Nicholas Lea, Dr Aytug Kizilors, Jamal Anwar, Dr Steve Best, Dr Najeem Folarin, Dr Azim Mohamedali, Dr Kar Lok Kong, Sophie Jackson and Josephine Goodwin.

Medical advice: Clinical Lead Dr Debby Yallop, Dr Shireen Kassam, Dr Guy Hannah, Dr Henry Wood and Dr Prudence Hardefeldt in the first instance.

Designation	Name	Telephone	Email
Laboratory for Molecular Haemato-oncology Contacts			
Laboratory Director	Robert Dunn	0203 299 8367	robert.dunn@synnovis.co.uk
Joint Laboratory lead	Dr Nicholas Lea	020 3299 4106	nlea@nhs.net
Joint Laboratory lead	Dr Aytug Kizilors	020 3299 4106	akizilors@nhs.net
Joint Clinical Lead	Dr Debby Yallop	0203 299 1217	deborah.yallop@nhs.net
Joint Clinical Lead	Dr Shireen Kassam	0203 299 5262	shireen.kassam@nhs.net
Quality Manager	Mrs Nura Ibrahim	0203 299 8367	nura.ibrahim@synnovis.co.uk
SE-HMDS contacts			
Consultant Haematologist	Dr Guy Hannah	0203 299 9000	guyhannah@nhs.net
Consultant Haematologist	Dr Henry Wood	0203 299 9000	henrywood@nhs.net
Consultant Haematologist	Dr Prudence Hardefeldt	0203 299 9000	prudence.hardefeldt@nhs.net

Complaints, suggestions and feedback

Synnovis is committed to continuously improving the quality and range of services provided and welcomes any comments or suggestions from users. Please contact the Laboratory or Quality Manager in the first instance regarding complaints and suggestions.

Complaints are managed via our Quality Management System and we always strive to provide a satisfactory response to any complaint. The complaints procedure is available from the Laboratory or Quality Manager.

1.4 Laboratory Opening Times

The LMH laboratory is open from Monday to Friday: 9 am to 5:30 pm.

The laboratory is not open on bank holidays.

Avoid sending samples on a Friday as they may not arrive in time for sample processing and there is a risk that they may be too old to process for RNA-based tests.

2. Use of the Laboratory

2.1 Test Requesting Procedure (routine, urgent and out of hours)

Routine requests can be made either by King's EPIC system (Denmark Hill site internal users) or the SE-HMDS request form (external users). During normal laboratory hours please telephone urgent requests (020 7848 5809 or 0203 299 4106) or speak to a SE-HMDS consultant to ensure priority processing.

It is the responsibility of the test requester to ensure that patient consent has been obtained.

The web page [Haemato-Oncology – South East Genomics](#) summarises the service provided by SE-HMDS and the SE-HMDS request form.

2.2 Requesting Additional Tests

Depending on the original request, the laboratory will attempt to preserve material for additional testing where required. Please contact the lab if further testing is required on a particular sample. Refer to Specimen Retention Policy below (page 10) for the retention periods for different sample types.

2.3 Completing the Request Form

Please use labels printed from laboratory computer systems whenever possible to maximise legibility and minimise risks of patient misidentification.

The minimum required dataset for request forms and sample labels is stated below.

Please note that inadequately labelled samples or those accompanied by inadequately completed forms will not be processed under any circumstances (see Dataset: below).

EPIC requests:

At the Denmark Hill site the following patient sample requests can be made via EPIC. Please select the correct test (these are listed in Section 7: Additional Information on Molecular Investigations in LMH lab below on page 10) and enter free text in the clinical details field if the test is not listed.

Paper based request forms:

The SE-HMDS Request form may be used for all requests. It is published at:

[Haemato-Oncology – South East Genomics](#)

All hand written forms should be completed legibly.

Referral of samples from the EPIC system or accompanied by a signed and completed SE-HMDS request form and acceptance of this sample for testing by the laboratory constitutes an agreement between the Requester and the SE-HMDS laboratories.

Dataset:

An EPIC-based or a paper-based request must accompany all specimens sent to the laboratory. It must state the following information clearly and legibly.

The details on the sample must have at least three points of identification (i.e. surname and first name, date of birth and hospital number or NHS number) and these must be identical on the request form to link the sample and request form unequivocally and for the sample to be processed.

Note the use of the NHS number is a legal requirement within the NHS and is essential to include on all requests.

The minimum dataset requirement for the form is listed below.

Patient Identifying Data:

- Surname/family name and first name(s) in full (surname and first name are one identifier)

- **NHS number, hospital number (KCH or other hospital) or other patient unique identification number (the same number must be on both the tube and the form)**
- **Date of birth**

Sample Identifying Data:

- **Date specimen taken**
- **Type of specimen**

Other Essential Data Required for Acceptance

- **Tests required**
- **Address for report**
- **Requesting Consultant**

Other useful data

- Contact details of the requester (Email and Phone)
- All relevant clinical details including:
 - Treatment
 - Transplant date (if transplanted)
 - Known molecular features for example Transcript type (e.g. BCR::ABL1 P210 or P190)

If uncertain about the exact test and terminology, please give a detailed clinical history as this can help SE-HMDS & LMH personnel to decide the most appropriate investigations.

2.4 Specimen Labelling

- Use labels wherever possible. Samples must have handwritten labels unless demand-printed labels are produced at the time of phlebotomy or biopsy.
- The specimen must be labelled with the same patient details as those on the request form
- Please ensure that hand written details are legible
- Please note that unlabelled or inadequately labelled specimens cannot be processed and will be discarded.

2.5 Specimen Collection

The best results are obtained when an appropriate, well-taken specimen is in the proper container, is delivered to the laboratory promptly and relevant clinical information is provided on the request form. Please contact the laboratory if there is any doubt about the best specimen to take or you have questions about any test.

General guidance on specimen collection includes:

- Send specimens in sterile containers
- Take specimens that are representative of the disease process.
- An adequate quantity of material should be obtained for complete examination (refer to SE-HMDS request form for required volumes)
- Sample tubes must not be opened following blood collection or used for any testing prior to being sent
- Sample tubes must be stored at ambient temp. (15°C to 25°C) avoid extremes of temperature before transport.
- Samples **MUST** be labelled, dated and signed by the person taking the sample.
- Skin samples sent for WGS **MUST** be supplied in sterile saline and transported to the laboratory urgently.

2.6 Specimen Limitations Affecting Assay Performance

Factors that can affect assay performance are as follows

- collection container: use of correct blood collection tubes – EDTA is required for molecular investigations
- Sample volume (this is particularly important for all RNA-based assays where volumes < 20ml may be insufficient)
- Storage and transportation conditions (see below)

2.7 Transport and packaging of Specimens (External Customers)

It is the responsibility of the sending organisation to ensure that samples are packaged in accordance with the current European Agreement concerning Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Regulations (packaging instructions 650) to prevent breakage or spillage in transit. The outside of the box or package containing the samples must be clearly addressed and the package must be accompanied by a correctly completed request form. Courier / taxi / suitable transport should be arranged by the sending institution or laboratory and the sender is responsible for ensuring the contractor can guarantee safe, timely and controlled transport and accurate delivery.

Samples must reach the laboratory in time to be processed during laboratory working hours within set time limits after venepuncture. Sample reception is open 24/7 but samples must arrive so that they can be processed within the time limits below.

First class postage is adequate but samples must be shipped with packaging appropriate for UN 3373 samples following packing instruction 650. See <http://www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/Guidance-Documents-Infectious-Substances-171012.pdf> for further details: **Samples must be transported in a way that protects their integrity and must not be exposed to extremes of temperature (> 25°C) or prolonged transport (> 2 days). Storage of samples prior to transport should be at ambient temperature, optimally between 15 °C and 25°C. Refrigeration is not necessary and maybe detrimental (in the case of chimerism fractionation).** If samples are in danger of being exposed to conditions where sample integrity or quality could be compromised or if further advice is needed, please contact the laboratory to discuss the most appropriate method of transport.

2.8 Transport and packaging of specimens (internal customers)

ROUTINE SAMPLES:

All King's specimens should be taken to central specimen reception at King's College Hospital or sent via the Pneumatic Air Tube Transport System (PATTS).

However, any difficult to resample or unrepeatable specimen of any type must not be sent via the air tube.

URGENT SAMPLES:

For all testing, send or bring the specimen **DIRECTLY** to Central Specimen Reception on the ground floor of the Bessemer Wing. *Please telephone 020 7848 5809 or contact the LMH duty Scientist email for specimens to be processed urgently.*

2.9 High Risk Specimens and Safety

Samples from patients with suspected viral haemorrhagic fevers or with a history of having returned within 21 days from Africa, Asia and South America are considered high risk. Contact Virology medical staff before taking ANY sample. LMH is unable to accept samples of this nature as they do not have the facilities to deal with them.

Great care must be taken in obtaining specimens. Equipment such as needles and blades must be immediately disposed of safely in locally approved "sharps" bins and NOT SENT TO LABORATORIES. Specimens should be transported to the laboratory without delay.

2.10 Result Availability

Our target is to issue reports from date of sample receipt within the intervals listed in sections 4, 5 & 6 below. Urgent samples may be tested more quickly by prior arrangement with the laboratory but turnaround times are limited by factors intrinsic to analytic procedures and prioritisation will always be according to clinical criteria. The requester will be notified by email or telephone if a significant delay in reporting is anticipated. Reports will be sent to the address indicated on the referral form and reports are also available on the SE-HMDS Referrer access portal.

Exporting of reports:

- LMH laboratory reports are exported to the SE-HMDS integrated reporting system immediately after authorisation.
- Integrated SE-HMDS reports are dispatched only after the results of all investigations have been completed and authorised by an SE-HMDS consultant. Where a report is required urgently or if an outstanding investigation will significantly delay reporting, an interim report is released by the SE-HMDS clinical team.
- For investigations requested by EPR a copy of the SE-HMDS integrated report is associated with the EPR record.
- External referrals are reported by both printing and mailing to the address provided by the requester or by emailing to a generic mailbox where this has been provided. Results are also currently available through the SE-HMDS Referrer access portal.
- Copies of reports can be obtained by telephoning extension 020 3299 5862.

2.11 Measurement Uncertainty

Measurement uncertainty is calculated for all LMH molecular assays during assay validation. These data can be obtained from the laboratory on enquiry. Please contact the LMH duty scientist in the first instance.

2.12 Specimen Retention Policy

Specimens are retained by the laboratory in order to repeat analysis or to enable additional analysis to be performed. The laboratory will attempt to retain / preserve samples in such a way to allow retesting and additional testing based on the clinical information provided. All samples are retained for a minimum of 5 years. Control material stored to facilitate the analysis of chimerism will be stored for a minimum of 10 years.

2.13 Telephoned Results

Results are not routinely telephoned but SE-HMDS clinical staff may contact requesters / care providers where considered clinical relevant.

2.14 Visitors

Visitors should introduce themselves at the Rayne Reception Ground Floor Rayne Institute, Coldharbour Lane. Security staff will call the laboratory to obtain the person they wish to see, who will come to meet them. It is best to make appointments in advance to ensure the right person is available.

3. Out of Hours' Service

3.1 Out of Hours' Examinations Provided in LMH

No on-call service is currently provided by LMH. Laboratory opening times are 09:00 to 17:30 Monday to Friday.

3.2 Medical Advice

During weekdays from 9 am to 5:30 pm medical advice on interpretation of LMH results, or advice about clinical management, or any other relevant clinical circumstance can be sought from the SE-HMDS consultants see section 1.3.

For out of hours advice (urgent clinical situations only), contact the haematology Specialist Registrar bleep holder via the KCH switchboard on 020 3299 9000

4. List of Tests Performed in LMH

Molecular Investigations			
Test	Specimen type	Schedule	Standard Turnaround Time**
BCR::ABL1 major (P210) quantitation*	EDTA PB or BM	3 times per week	14 days
BCR::ABL1 minor (P190) quantitation*	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	14 days
BCR::ABL1 Multiplex screening*	EDTA PB or BM	2 times per week	14 days
PML::RARA translocation quantitation*	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	14 days
RUNX::RUNX1 translocation quantitation*	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	14 days
CBFB::MYH11 translocation quantitation*	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	14 days
Post SCT Chimerism analysis*	EDTA PB or BM	3 times per week	14 days
JAK2 V617F mutation quantitation	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	21 days
Myeloproliferative neoplasm panel	EDTA PB or BM	Weekly	21 days
BRAF V600E mutation detection	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	14 days
MYD88 L265P mutation detection	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	21 days
ABL1 kinase domain mutation detection*	EDTA PB or BM	Weekly	21 days
Myeloid and Lymphoid gene panels	EDTA PB or BM	Weekly	21 days
SNP array karyotyping	EDTA PB or BM	Weekly	21 days
FLT3 / NPM1 mutation analysis	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	3 days#
IDH1 R132 mutation analysis	EDTA PB or BM	On demand	7 days#

* These tests utilise RT qPCR methods (RNA based) or cell fractionation so samples must be < 72 hours old when received – refer to the Section 7: Additional Information on Molecular Investigations in LMH lab below on page 13 for further information.

** Maximum turnaround time in calendar days from receipt of sample during working week

This is the current NHSE commissioned TAT. The LMH laboratory will attempt to deliver this assay within the NHSE target TAT where the service allows.

5. Tests Referred to Other Laboratories

Test	Sample type	Reference Laboratory	Turnaround Time
KIT mutation detection and monitoring in SM**	EDTA BM only NOT PB	Wessex Regional Genetic Laboratory	20 days
FIP1L1::PDGFRA translocation* (monitoring only)	EDTA PB or BM	Wessex Regional Genetic Laboratory	20 days
NPM1 transcript monitoring / rare translocations in AML**	EDTA PB or BM	Synnovis Molecular Oncology Unit, Guys Cancer Centre UKAS Lab No 8688	14 days
IgVH resequencing **	EDTA PB or BM	Synnovis Advanced Diagnostics, King's college Hospital	21 days
BCR::ABL1 rare transcripts (not included above) monitoring **	EDTA PB or BM	Hammersmith Hospital Molecular Pathology HMDS	20 days
Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia MRD testing **	EDTA BM only NOT PB	National Adult ALL MRD Service, Royal London Hospital SIHMDS, Bart's Health	14 days

Key:

* = NOT a test within the ISO15189 accreditation scope of the laboratory

** = a test within the ISO15189 accreditation scope of the sendaway laboratory

6. External Quality Assurance (EQA) scheme participation

Test	EQA Schemes
BCR::ABL1 major (P210) quantitation	NEQAS
Post Stem Cell Transplant Chimerism analysis	NEQAS
MYD88 L265P mutation detection	NEQAS pilot scheme
ABL1 kinase domain mutation detection	NEQAS
Myeloid gene panel NGS	NEQAS pilot scheme
SNP array karyotyping Myeloid	GenQA
SNP array karyotyping Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia (CLL)	GenQA
SNP array karyotyping Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL)	GenQA
TP53 (NGS)	NEQAS and GenQA
MPN gene panel NGS	NEQAS pilot scheme
BCR::ABL1 and AML Translocation Identification	NEQAS
BCR::ABL1 minor (P190) quantitation	NEQAS pilot scheme
Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia Gene Panels NGS	NEQAS pilot scheme
FLT3 Mutation Status	NEQAS
NPM1 Mutation Status	NEQAS
DNA extraction from venous blood	GenQA
Measurable Residual Disease for AML by Molecular Methods	NEQAS pilot scheme
BRAF V600E mutation detection	NEQAS

7. Additional Information on Molecular Investigations in LMH lab

7.1 MPN panel testing

Testing the MPN spectrum of diseases is now largely covered by a NSG “mini” panel. This panel uses targeted amplicon NSG to analyse the hotspots on the 3 candidate MPN genes JAK2, CALR and MPL. This assay is capable of detecting all common variants of JAK2, CALR and MPL and has a broader range for mutation detection than the single gene assays listed below. The assay also provides information on all 3 genes simultaneously rather than requiring sequential testing of candidate genes. The assay limit of detection is 2%

7.2 Single gene MPN mutation analysis

The LMH laboratory no longer provides single gene target analysis. The MPN mutation analysis service is delivered using an MPN NGS panel covering JAK2, CALR and MPL.

Factors affecting results or interpretation: Samples received in heparin are not amenable to PCR based analysis and can therefore not be tested for JAK2 V617F or MPN NGS panel. Note there are rare mutations of both JAK2 and MPL occurring in other codons that are not detected using the MPN panel assay deployed by the LMH laboratory. The LMH laboratory plan to launch an enhanced myeloid gene panel which will cover the full length of these genes and can be used to detect these rare mutations as well where there is a very strong suspicion of an underlying MPN. Please enquire if this service is required.

7.3 FLT3 & NPM1 mutation analysis

Clinical Relevance / Purpose

1. An internal tandem duplication in the fms-like tyrosine kinase 3 gene (FLT3/ITD) is a common finding in approximately 25% of younger adult AML patients in acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) (Small 2006). The length of the ITD varies between 3 and 400 bases and is always in frame and therefore expected to produce functional protein.
2. Point mutations that most frequently involve aspartic acid 835 of the tyrosine kinase domain (TKD) are the second major type of FLT3 mutations, seen in 8-12% of patients with AML (Small 2006). FLT3-TKD point mutations, along with deletions and insertions, have also been found in several other sites (Patnaik MM 2018).
3. In vitro studies have shown that insertions lead to a constitutively activated receptor (Hayakawa F et al 2000). It is widely accepted that, in AML patients, FLT3-ITDs are associated with leucocytosis, a high percentage of bone marrow blast cells, increased risk of relapse from complete remission (CR) and reduced survival (Kottaridis PD et al 2003). FLT3-ITD is an uncommon mutation in MDS (3-6%) but its presence is linked with a high probability of MDS transforming to AML (Pinheiro RF et al 2008).
4. FLT3-TKD mutations often involve the activation loop, and thus also result in constitutive activation of the receptor's tyrosine kinase activity (Small 2006). FLT3-TKD mutations have been associated with high percentages of peripheral blood and bone marrow blast cells, but the prognostic impact is still unclear. (Frohling S et al 2002).
5. The 2017 ELN recommendations include molecular testing for both FLT3-ITD and FLT3-TKD mutations, due to the emergence of FLT3 inhibitors, such as midostaurin, in treatment of patients with FLT3-mutated AML (Dohner H et al 2017).
6. Not all FLT3-ITD mutations are equal; the prognostic impact is influenced by the allele ratio (AR). AR is defined as the ratio of ITD-mutated alleles to wild-type allele (FLT3-ITD/FLT3 wild-type). Variant allele frequency (VAF) is the ratio of ITD-mutated alleles to ITD-mutated + wild-type alleles (FLT3-ITD/FLT3-ITD + FLT3 wild-type). In newly diagnosed AML FLT3-ITDmut after post-remission therapy with either consolidation (high-dose cytarabine-based) or allogeneic stem cell transplant, AR ≥ 0.51 were associated with an unfavourable Relapse free survival (RFS) and overall survival (OS). In fact, every quartile increase in FLT3-ITD AR (from 0.01 to 0.20, 0.20 to

0.53, 0.53 to 0.80, 0.80 to 1.19) was associated with worsening complete remission (CR) rates, RFS, and OS, highlighting the prognostic value of AR. The LMH FLT3ITD mutation assay incorporates an assessment of AR and this is reported on LMH FLT3ITD mutation assay reports. FLT3ITD AR is not reported on FLT mutation assessments from the NGS based myeloid gene panel assay reports as the AR reported from this methodology is liable to inaccuracies due to limitations of NGS based analysis of large insertions and deletions.

7. Mutations in exon 12 of the nucleophosmin (NPM) 1 gene have been reported in AML and MDS patients with normal karyotype. They take the form of a 4 bp insertion. Overall NPM1 mutations generally are associated with a trend for improved overall survival and significantly better event free or relapse-free survival, and in multivariate analysis they are an independent good prognostic factor for outcome (Schnittger S et al 2005)

8. The favourable outcome associated with NPM1 mutations is largely lost in the presence of a FLT3/ITD (Gale R et al 2008)

Principle

1. The principle of this assay is the discrimination of the wild type from the mutated DNA sequences based on the length of a PCR fragment generated by amplifying regions of the two genes which include the hotspot for insertion. Mutated genes give rise to larger PCR amplicons and wild type genes produce an amplicon of a predictable and stable size.

2. Two primers are used for each gene. The forward primer in each case is labelled with a fluorescent dye which is incorporated into the amplified PCR product and can later be detected on a capillary electrophoresis instrument during the sizing portion of the assay

3. To determine the FLT3 TKD mutation status the primers are positioned to target TKD mutations in the activating loop of the kinase domain. Wild type FLT3 gene includes an EcoRV restriction digest site. When nucleic acid substitution occurs, as with FLT3-TKD mutations, the restriction digest recognition site disappears. In order to identify the FLT3-TKD point mutation using fragment length analysis, an EcoRV digest is performed on PCR amplified target region of FLT3. One of the PCR primers contains an EcoRV restriction site, allowing both wild type and mutant genes to be digested with different digestion patterns.

4. The most recent version of the LMH FLT3 ITD assay is validated to be quantitative for allelic ratio. The ratio is quantified by dividing the FLT3 ITD peaks with the total FLT3 wt and FLT mutated peaks to derive an allelic ratio.

7.4 IDH1 R132 mutation screening in newly diagnosed AML

Purpose

Isocitrate Dehydrogenase (IDH) is an enzyme to catalyse the reversible NAD⁺ dependent oxidative decarboxylation of isocitrate to α -ketoglutarate (α -KG) (Cairns RA, et al 2013). There are 2 isoforms of IDH – IDH1 and IDH2. Having the same function, IDH1 is located in the cytosol whilst IDH2 is localized in the mitochondria (Waitkus MS, et al 2018). IDH1 and 2 mutations are missense mutations mainly located on 3 different hotspots: IDH1 R132, IDH2 R140 and IDH2 R172. These hotspots are located within the catalytic domain of the enzymes. Mutant IDH enzymes convert α -KG into the oncometabolite D-2-hydroxyglutarate (D-2HG) which altered metabolism, blocked differentiation, restructured chromatin, etc (Christopher J Pirozzi, et al 2021). The first IDH somatic mutation discovered was IDH1 mutation in colorectal cancer patients (Sjoberg T, et al 2006). Since then, IDH1 and IDH2 mutations have been identified across many different cancers such as acute myeloid leukemia (AML), glioblastoma, chondrosarcoma, thyroid carcinoma, etc (Parsons DW et al 2008, Pirozzi CJ, et al 2021 and Yan H, et al 2009). This indicates that IDH mutations might have a key pathogenic role among different types of cancers.

IDH inhibitors or targeted therapy have been actively evaluated. Studies or Clinical Trials include IDH 1 or 2 inhibitors alone or in association with 5-azacytidine in relapsed, refractory or newly diagnosed AML have been carried out (DiNardo CD et al. 2018, Heuser M, et al 2020 and DiNardo

CD et al 2021). Recently, there was a clinical trial called Agile Clinical Trial (NCT03173248) which was a phase 3 randomized trial testing the efficacy of combining Ivosidenib (IDH1 inhibitor) and azacitidine for newly diagnosed AML patients. The result showed significantly improved event-free survival, response, and overall survival (Pau Montesinos, et al 2022). Based on the clinical trial result and other considerations, NICE has approved Ivosidenib in combination with azacycline for newly diagnosed AML patients who are not suitable for chemotherapy (TA979). Because of the significance, IDH testing was recommended by ELN AML guideline (2022) with 3 to 5 days turnaround time (Döhner H, et al 2022).

Principle

The principle of this assay is to detect IDH1 R132 hotspot mutations by using ddPCR multiplex technique. This is a multiplex reaction to detect wildtype and 6 IDH1 R132 mutations in single well.

Sensitivity, specificity and accuracy of the assay were evaluated as described in Mattocks et al, using a range of patient samples which are positive or negative for the IDH1 R132 mutations. Double stranded DNA gBlocks from IDT have been used as controls for IDH1 mutations R132C, R132L, R132S, R132G, R132H, R132V. Repeatability (intra-assay precision) and inter-assay precision was determined with IQC material and data has been used to calculate Measure of Uncertainty. Trueness and reproducibility of the assay were assessed with samples that were positive for IDH1 R132 by MGP and compared against ddPCR results.

7.5 Myeloid Gene Panel and Lymphoid gene panel

These tests use Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology to identify somatic mutations in haematological malignancies for patient diagnosis and/or prognosis. The panels are designed to sequence genes or gene sub-regions (hot spots) that are frequently mutated in Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML), Myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) and Myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPN) and wide range of lymphoid malignancies. The panels provide a comprehensive assessment of the key genes involved in these malignancies in a single test. The content of the two panels meet the requirements of the NHSE national test directory for single nucleotide variants. The panel is not designed for MRD monitoring as the limit of detection is set at 5% variant allele frequency.

Sample requirements: this method is designed to detect somatic and inherited mutations in clinically relevant sample, for example peripheral blood, bone marrow and blood films can be used. Fresh samples should be provided in EDTA or Heparin. The use of DNA from fixed cells is also validated. If DNA is provided from an external user, the DNA should be between 10-50 ng/µl. It is possible to use less than 10ng/µl, but this is not recommended, as gene coverage will be compromised and variants may be missed.

Methods and validation: we use the QiaSeq Custom DNA Amplicon methodology from Qiagen. This involves DNA fragmentation, ligation of indexing and sequencing adapters, target enrichment and PCR amplification. Libraries are sequencing on an Illumina NextSeq 550 instrument. The library preparation may be performed manually or using a Hamilton Microlab Star liquid handling system. The reaction chemistry uses Unique Molecular Indices (UMIs) to reduce background artefacts. QIAseq Targeted DNA Panels have also been optimized in combination with a specially formulated enrichment chemistry to achieve highly efficient enrichment on both regular and GC-rich regions at high multiplex levels. In-house data analysis is performed using our validated bioinformatics pipeline (Snappy) and variant calling and analysis software (SQVD and VASA).

Factors affecting results or interpretation: This method has undergone thorough validation and an extension to scope is in preparation under our existing UKAS ISO15189 accreditation. The sensitivity of the technology is limited to 5% variant allele frequency if target coverage is >400x. If coverage is between 200-400x, limit of detection is 10%. This panel is ideally suited to the detection of SNVs and small insertion/deletions. Insertions of more than 100bp may not be detected, as is the case for large FLT3-ITDs. This assay is not suitable for monitoring patients post treatment, including post transplantation, unless relapse is suspected.

The MGP targets are as follows:

Gene	Targets	Transcript
ANKRD26	all coding and 3' UTR	NM_014915.3
ASXL1	exon 12	NM_015338.6
BCL2	all coding	NM_000633.3
BCOR	all coding	NM_001123385.2
CALR	exon 9	NM_004343.4
CBL	exons 7+8+9	NM_005188.4
CEBPA	all coding	NM_004364.5
CSF3R	exons 13 to 18	NM_156039.3
CUX1	all coding	NM_181552.4
DDX41	all coding	NM_016222.4
DNMT3A	all coding	NM_022552.5
ETV6	all coding	NM_001987.5
EZH2	all coding	NM_004456.5
FLT3	exons 14+15+20	NM_004119.3
GATA1	all coding	NM_002049.4
GATA2	all coding	NM_032638.5
GNB1	all coding	NM_002074.5
HRAS	exons 2+3	NM_005343.4
IDH1	exon 4	NM_005896.4
IDH2	exon 4	NM_002168.4
IKZF1	exons all coding	NM_006060.6
JAK2	all coding	NM_004972.4
KIT	exons 2, 8 to 11, 13+17	NM_000222.3
KMT2A	all coding	NM_001197104.2
KMT2C	all coding	NM_170606.3
KRAS	exons 2+3	NM_033360.4
MPL	all coding	NM_005373.3
NF1	all coding	NM_001042492.3
NFE2	all coding	NM_001136023.3
NPM1	exon 12	NM_002520.6
NRAS	exons 2+3	NM_002524.5
PHF6	all coding	NM_032458.3
PPM1D	all coding	NM_003620.4

PTPN11	exons 3+13	NM_002834.5
RAD21	all coding	NM_006265.3
RUNX1	all coding	NM_001754.5
SETBP1	exon 4	NM_015559.3
SF3B1	exons 12 to 16	NM_012433.4
SH2B3	all coding	NM_005475.3
SRSF2	exon 1	NM_003016.4
STAG2	all coding	NM_001042749.2
STAT5B	all coding	NM_012448.4
TET2	all coding	NM_001127208.2
TP53	all coding	NM_000546.6
U2AF1	exons 2+6	NM_006758.3
UBA1	all coding	NM_003334.4
WT1	exons 7+9	NM_024426.6
ZRSR2	all coding	NM_005089.4

The LGP targets are as follows:

Gene	Chromosome	Targets	Transcript
ARAF	chrX	all coding	NM_001654.5
ARID1A	chr1	all coding	NM_006015.6
ATM	Chr11	all coding	NM_000051.4
BCL11B	Chr14	all coding	NM_138576.4
BCL2	Chr18	all coding	NM_000633.3
BIRC3	Chr11	all coding	NM_001165.5
BRAF	chr7	exon 15	NM_004333.6
BTK	chrX	all coding	NM_000061.3
CARD11	chr7	all coding	NM_032415.6
CREBBP	chr16	all coding	NM_004380.3
CXCR4	chr2	all coding	NM_003467.3
DIS3	chr13	all coding	NM_014953.5
DNMT3A	chr2	all coding	NM_022552.4
EP300	chr22	all coding	NM_001429.4
ERBB3	chr12	all coding	NM_001982.4
ETV6	chr12	all coding	NM_001987.5
EZH2	chr7	all coding	NM_004456.5
FBXW7	chr4	all coding	NM_033632.3
FOXO1	chr13	all coding	NM_002015.4
HRAS	chr11	exons 2 + 3	NM_005343.4
IDH2	chr15	exon 4	NM_002168.4
IL7R	chr5	all coding	NM_002185.5
IRF4	chr6	all coding	NM_002460.4
KRAS	chr12	2 + 3	NM_033360.4
MAP2K1	chr15	all coding	NM_002755.4
MAP3K1	chr5	all coding	NM_005921.2
MEF2B	chr19	all coding	NM_001145785.2
MYD88	chr3	exons 3 + 4 + 5	NM_001172567.2
NOTCH1	chr9	exon 34	NM_017617.5
NRAS	chr1	exons 2 + 3	NM_002524.5
PIK3CA	chr3	all coding	NM_006218.4
PIK3CD	chr1	9	NM_005026.5
PLCG2	chr16	all coding	NM_002661.5
RHOA	chr3	all coding	NM_001664.4
SF3B1	chr2	all coding	NM_012433.4
STAT3	chr17	exon 20 + 21	NM_139276.3
STAT5B	chr17	exons 14 + 15 + 16	NM_012448.4
TENT5C	chr1	all coding	NM_017709.4
TET2	chr4	all coding	NM_001127208.2
TP53	chr17	all coding	NM_000546.5

7.6 BRAF V600 Mutation

BRAF is the most commonly mutated gene in human cancers and encodes a serine/threonine protein kinase involved in cellular growth signalling (Davies et al., 2002). In Hairy Cell Leukaemia (HCL), the V600E variation has been found in a high proportion of cases (see Tiacci et al., 2011) proving to be an effective diagnostic marker for HCL. Early diagnosis of HCL is important because it can translate into a treatable disease outcome using highly effective purine nucleoside analogues (Grever, 2010).

The purpose of this assay is the screening of the V600E and V600K variation in BRAF using an allele specific PCR-based Amplification Refractory Mutation System (ARM) to aid pathologists in the diagnosis of HCL in ambiguous cases.

References:

Davies H, Bignell GR, Cox C, et al. Mutations of the BRAF gene in human cancer. *Nature* 2002; 417:949-954
 Ellison G, Donald E, McWalter G, et al. A comparison of ARMS and DNA sequencing for mutation analysis in clinical biopsy samples. *J Exp Clin Cancer Res* 2010; 29:132.
 Grever MR. How I treat hairy cell leukemia. *Blood* 2010; 115:21-28
 Tiacci E, Trifonov V, Schiavoni G, et al. BRAF mutations in hairy-cell leukemia. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2011; 364:2305–2315.

Factors affecting results or interpretation: The sensitivity of the BRAF V600 assay is limited to 0.5% variant allele frequency. Samples containing lower numbers of tumour cells are likely to subject to false negative results. This assay may be suitable for monitoring patients post treatment including post transplantation.

7.7 MYD88 L265P Mutation

The single gene PCR based assay for MYD88 mutations is offered mostly as a salvage pathway for poor quality samples such as DNA from FFPE or samples such as vitreous humor which have failed or are likely to fail the LGP assay

MYD88 L265P is a mutation present in the B-cell lymphoproliferative disorders Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia (WM) and IgM Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (IgM MGUS). MYD88 L265P has been found in other B-cell disorders at a lower level, including Diffuse Large B-cell Lymphoma of the ABC subtype (ABC-DLBCL), Splenic Marginal Zone Lymphoma (SMZL) etc. In particular this mutation was present in WM at 93% and has consistently been shown to be reported at around this level by several other groups. Studies have shown that MYD88 L265P detection in IGM MGUS patients (54%) is an early oncogenic event in the progression to WM. MYD88 was found to be a component in the process of I κ B α phosphorylation and NF- κ B activation by directing the construction of a signalling complex. In NF- κ B signalling we can see MYD88 is integral to the pathway as it is directly or indirectly activated by Interleukin-1 receptor or Toll-like receptor 4. This triggers autophosphorylation of IRAK (interleukin-1 receptor-associated kinase) 4. At the end of this pathway I κ B α is phosphorylated and NF- κ B p65 and p50 is released which induces prosurvival signalling in these cells.

A PCR based assay for the MYD88 L265P mutation has been established and is based on the allele specific qPCR method published by Xu et al 2013. This PCR assay used within the LMH laboratory is capable of identifying patients who carry a mutant copy of the MYD88 allele at codon 265 at 1% mutation. This change in nucleotide sequence produces a substitution of the amino acid leucine to proline. A negative result does not rule out one of the above conditions; however a positive result would strongly suggest the diagnosis of Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia, and is useful in diagnosis when analysed with other clinical features. Detection of MYD88 L265P may also be useful with respects to implementing treatment strategies.

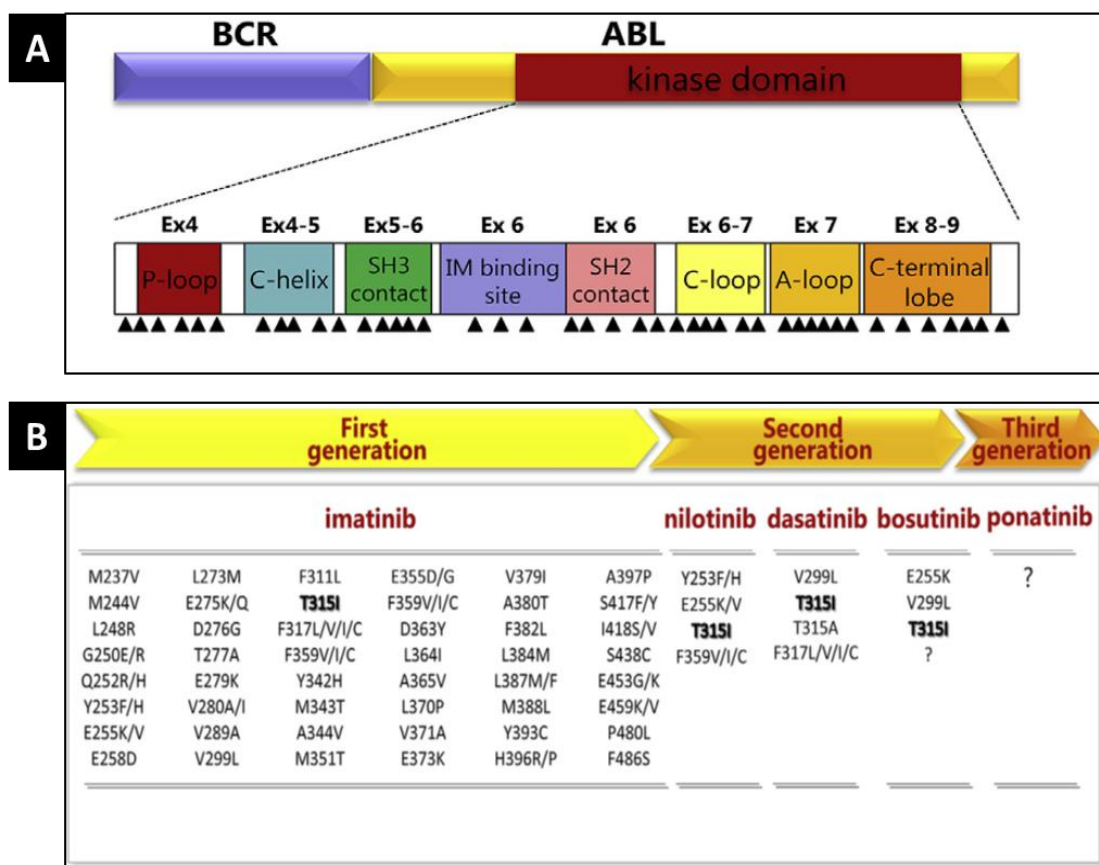
Factors affecting results or interpretation: The sensitivity of the MYD L265P assay is limited to 1% variant allele frequency. Samples containing lower concentrations of tumour cells are likely

to subject to false negative results. This assay may be suitable for monitoring patients post treatment including following post transplantation.

7.7 ABL1 kinase domain mutation

Imatinib or the second and third generation tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs) can induce durable responses in the majority of patients with chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML) or Ph+ Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (Ph+ALL); but some patients either fail to respond (primary resistance) or respond initially or then lose their response (secondary resistance). Although TKI resistance can be multi-factorial (BCR::ABL1 kinase domain (KD) mutations, BCR::ABL1 amplification, overexpression and clonal evolution with activation of additional oncogenic pathways), point mutations within the KD of BCR::ABL1 constitute the most frequent mechanism.

In particular, these mutations cause amino acid substitutions inside the KD, consequently impairing TKI binding and resulting in a loss of sensitivity to TKI by a direct or indirect mechanism. Depending on the regions where they are located (Figure 1), mutations can actually interrupt critical contact points between the TKI and BCR::ABL1 protein, or they can induce a conformational change, resulting in a protein to which TKI is unable to bind. At present, approximately 90 different BCR::ABL1 KD mutations have been identified. Many of these are relatively rare, whereas the most common, which account for 60-70% of all the mutations are shown in the diagram below.



BCR::ABL1 Kinase domain and mutations (A) Magnification of the BCR::ABL1 kinase domain, showing the main functional subdomains. Black triangles indicate Imatinib-resistant mutations. (B) Summary of the mutations reported to be insensitive to Imatinib, Nilotinib, Dasatinib, Bosutinib, and Ponatinib.

The LMH laboratory has developed NGS based sequencing approaches to interrogate the Kinase domain of BCR::ABL1 which has an enhanced sensitivity (around 3%) and is capable of detecting low level drug resistant clones early.

Factors affecting results or interpretation: Like many translocation assays sequencing of the ABL1 kinase domain from BCR::ABL1 is performed from RNA which is very susceptible to degradation.

Samples received in heparin are not amenable to PCR based analysis and will not be tested.

7.8 Chimerism

The Chimerism investigation is carried out to monitor the engraftment of Bone Marrow (BM), Peripheral Blood (PB), CD3 T-cells, CD15 Granulocytes and CD19 B-Cells following Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant. The microsatellite regions which the individual primer sets are designed to amplify, consist of repetitive sequences (short tandem repeats STRs) of DNA 3-7 base pairs in length. These STRs are well distributed throughout the human genome and are highly polymorphic. There are many advantages of STR typing. It is more tolerant of the use of degraded DNA templates than other typing methods because the amplification products are less than 500bp long. STR typing is also amenable to a variety of rapid DNA purification techniques, which are compatible with PCR but do not provide enough DNA of appropriate quality for Southern blot-based analyses. Donor and Pre-transplant recipient samples must be obtained before the Post-transplant sample can be analysed. The donor and recipient samples are run in conjunction with all post-transplant specimens (BM, PB or fractionated cells) to illustrate the individual polymorphic alleles which distinguish the donor population from the recipient. Analysis of chimerism is valuable in assessing patient's response to transplantation. Observing a complete donor profile in the post-transplant samples indicates a successful transplant. Chimeric profiles, (the presence of both donor and recipient allelic peaks) depending on the donor to recipient ratio (%), may indicate a less successful engraftment or progression to relapse. Following analysis, donor and recipient profiles can be semi-quantified in the post-transplant sample by obtaining the values for the areas underneath respective peaks and calculating the percentages of each. A value is obtained for each of the informative genes and the mean is calculated to give a more accurate indication of the recipient status. The 16 gene profiles for each patient are printed and handed to the consultant haematologist at least 24 hours before the weekly chimerism meeting, where the individual cases are discussed with the BMT co-ordination team.

Factors affecting results or interpretation: Post-transplanted samples can only be assessed alongside a donor and pre-transplant DNA profile. These samples must be provided as a one-off prior to the sending of post-transplant material.

Reference: Edwards, A. et al. (1991) DNA typing with trimeric and tetrameric tandem repeats; polymorphic loci, detection systems and population genetics. In: The Second International Symposium on Human Identification 1991, Promega Corporation, 31 - 52. Edwards, A. et al. (1991) DNA typing and genetic mapping with trimeric and tetrameric tandem repeats. Am Journal Hum. Genetics. 49, 746 – 56 Warne, D. et al. (1991) Tetranucleotide repeat polymorphism at the human B-actin related pseudogene 2 detected using the polymerase chain reaction. Nucl Acids Res. 19, 6980

7.9 SNP-Array Karyotyping

Leukaemia's are characterized by recurring chromosomal and genetic abnormalities and identification of these abnormalities plays important role in diagnosis, risk assessment and patient classification as defined in the WHO classification. Current methods like metaphase cytogenetic analysis and Florescent In Situ Hybridization (FISH) to detect genomic aberrations provide limited data due to the poor in vitro growth of the abnormal clone, poor resolution and are limited to only known regions of the genome.

High-resolution Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) microarrays can identify genome-wide cytogenetically cryptic genomic aberrations that can be of diagnostic and prognostic significance. With an intermarker spacing of 750bp, SNP arrays enable very high resolution genome wide detection of copy number abnormalities. The ability to utilise a variety of clinical tissue including archived tissue material without in vitro processing, like cell culture and stimulation, provides the added benefit of unbiased cell analysis and reduced failure rate. SNP array also has the advantage of simultaneous genotyping, enabling detection of copy number neutral loss of

heterozygosity (CN-LOH) or uniparental disomy (UPD). These regions have been shown to harbour point mutations in genes known to have pathogenic consequences in myeloid malignancies, such as TET2, JAK2, EZH2, CBL etc. Presence of UPD has also shown to have similar consequences on patient outcome as if they had deletions. Data interpretation is objective based on definite probe signals rather than subjective visual assessment of band intensities.

The purpose of this assay is to detect genomic aberrations in the genomic DNA from patients with haematological malignancies so as to aid in the diagnosis and treatment management of these diseases.

CytoScan Assay provides genome-wide coverage for the detection of chromosomal imbalances. The CytoScan array contains approximately 2.7 million markers which are representative of DNA sequences distributed throughout the genome with spacing, on average, approximately 880 bases apart in genic regions, and approximately 1700 bases apart in non-genic regions. The majority of the markers (1.9 million) are non-polymorphic markers, which provide overall genomic coverage of relevant cytogenetic regions and are used for assessing copy number. The assay utilises 750,000 SNPs that are DNA variants occurring in a large proportion of the human population (>1%). Each individual inherits one allele copy from each parent, so that the individual genotype at an SNP site is either AA, BB, or AB. The array contains oligonucleotides that are specific for each of the two SNP alleles, referred to as A and B. As a fluorescent signal is obtained for each allele at a given SNP site, the strength of the hybridization intensity provides information about both SNP genotype (A, B, or AB) and copy number state (heterozygous or homozygous due to hybridization of genomic DNA to both or one probe variant, respectively).

ChAS software is used to analyse and visualize microarray data. The signal intensity of the hybridized DNA from the patient sample is compared to a reference DNA, which is based on an average of over 400 samples. The ratio of patient sample to reference intensity is expressed as a log2 ratio, and represents the relative intensity for each marker. A discrete copy number value is computed from the relative intensity data, and is displayed as the marker copy number state. The non-integer copy number states are calculated and displayed as the smoothed signal track, which can be used to support an interpretation of a mosaic gain or loss. The SNP marker A- and B-allele intensities are also visualised in the Allele Track, which can be used to confirm copy number variation regions. The allele tracks show 3 bands (AA, AB, BB) in normal diploid regions, 4 bands (AAA, AAB, ABB, BBB) in triploid regions, and 2 bands (A, B) in haploid regions. The SNP markers are also analysed for long contiguous stretches of homozygosity, which are visualized in the loss of heterozygosity (LOH) track. The absence or loss of heterozygosity (LOH) is calculated as a region significantly devoid of heterozygous genotype calls.

Factors affecting results or interpretation: The procedure relies on the availability of good quality genomic DNA obtained from the peripheral blood, bone marrow of patients the sensitivity is limited to around 20%. Samples containing lower concentrations of tumour cells are likely to subject to false negative results. This assay is not suitable for monitoring patients post treatment including post transplantation unless relapse is suspected or the tumour burden remains high. SNP-array is only capable of detecting copy number imbalances. Balanced translocations are not detected SNP-array.

Please contact the Clinical Lead (see Key Personnel and Contact Details above on page 6) for further advice about SNP array karyotyping, its role in the diagnostic process and interpretation alongside other diagnostic information.

References:

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- Mohamedali, A. M., et al. (2015). "High concordance of genomic and cytogenetic aberrations between peripheral blood and bone marrow in myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS)." *Leukemia* 29(9): 1928-1938.

7.10 Translocation assays

BCR::ABL1 t(9;22)

Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML) accounts for 15-20% of adult leukaemia's. CML is a clonal haematopoietic stem cell malignancy that results in the formation of a BCR::ABL1 cytoplasmic fusion oncoprotein as the result of the reciprocal translocation between the long arms of chromosome 9 and chromosome 22 t(9;22). The disease is characterized by excess proliferation of myeloid progenitors that retain the capacity for differentiation during the stable or chronic phase of the disease. In addition, the BCR::ABL1 fusion is also seen in ALL albeit more rarely. In this disease the BCR::ABL1 fusion is the result of a slightly different break point and results in the p190 BCR::ABL1 fusion protein.

In addition, several rare BCR::ABL1 variant fusion genes have been described, such as the variants that result in the p195, p200, p225 and P230 BCR::ABL1 fusion proteins. We utilise a multiplex PCR which includes primer combinations that are able to co-amplify 14 different BCR::ABL1 fusion transcripts (P210 transcripts e13a2, e13a3, e14a2 & e14a3; P190 transcripts e1a2 & e1a3; P230 transcripts e19a2 & e19a3; P195 transcripts e6a2 & e6a3; P200 transcripts e8a2 & e8a3; P225 transcripts e18a2 & e18a3) and the internal loading control (BCR) in a single tube. The fragments generated by PCR will be run by capillary electrophoresis on the 3130 XL analyser and sized using a size standard to determine the exact length of the fragments generated, thus determining the specific BCR::ABL1 transcript.

Once the BCR::ABL1 transcript is identified a quantitative PCR (Q-PCR) utilizing the Applied Biosystems StepOne Plus platform is used for the highly sensitive quantitative detection of BCR::ABL1 fusion transcripts (p210 and p190) in order to monitor disease progression and residual disease. The procedure used at KCH is harmonized to the Europe Against Cancer (EAC) guidelines to ensure that we provide highly accurate and comparable BCR::ABL1 / ABL1 transcript ratios. In addition, we are one of a small group of laboratories in the UK currently engaged with the regional genetics laboratory to obtain an international conversion factor. This will enable our results to be directly compared with those of any other participating laboratory across the world. This provides even greater consistency which is desirable particularly in multi-centre drug trials. Our conversion factor exercise will be completed in early 2010. A separate Q-PCR assay is used to detect the p190 variant. The rarer BCR::ABL1 variants are forwarded on to the Hammersmith Hospital laboratory whom have expertise in monitoring these transcripts.

Persistent Q-PCR positivity after treatment is indicative of possible drug resistance and predictive of clinical relapse. A molecularly negative result is associated with disease free survival. Patients

who convert to Q-PCR positivity after a negative result are at high risk of relapse. These patients may be candidates for 2nd and 3rd generation tyrosine kinase inhibitors. Failure to respond optimally to Imatinib can be caused by mutation in the p-loop domain of the translocated ABL kinase gene. Our repertoire of tests within the LMH also includes *abl* kinase p-loop mutation screening which can be carried out on samples previously sent to the laboratory for BCR::ABL1 monitoring by request

RUNX1::RUNXTI t(8;21)

The t(8;21) translocation is detected in approximately 7% of de novo AML (20-40% in the M2 subtype). The fusion gene encodes a chimeric protein, which blocks myeloid differentiation and may be important in myeloid leukaemogenesis. AML patients with t(8;21) have a relatively good prognosis.

This PCR reaction is designed to detect the fusion transcript AML1::MTG8(ETO) in t(8;21) positive AML patients at presentation and for accurate monitoring of residual disease level to identify patients at high risk of relapse.

References: Tobal K, Yin JA. Monitoring of minimal residual disease by quantitative reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction for AML1::MTG8 transcripts in AML-M2 with t(8; 21). Blood. 1996 Nov 15;88(10):3704-9.

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Van Donegan J.J et al 1999 Standardized RT-PCR analysis of fusion gene transcripts from chromosome aberrations in acute leukemia for detection of minimal residual disease in acute leukemia. Report of the BIOMED-1 Concerted Action: investigation of minimal residual disease in acute leukemia. Leukemia 13 1901-1928

PML::RARA; t(15;17)

This PCR reaction is designed to detect the fusion transcript PMLRARA in patients with APML at presentation and for monitoring the disease.

The t(15;17) chromosomal translocation is a specific characteristic associated with acute promyelocytic leukaemia (APL, AML –M3). Two chimeric genes PML-RARA and RARA::PML are detected in 100% and 40% of APL patients respectively. The PML breakpoints cluster in three regions intron 6 BCR-1 (L-long-form), exon 6 BCR-2 (V-variable-form) or intron 3 BCR-3 (S-short-form) that fuse with the 3 prime portion of RARA intron 2. The isoforms occur in 55-60%, 35-40% and 8% of APL patients respectively. Several groups have reported that molecular monitoring of PML::RARA to evaluate MRD is clinically valuable in APL.

RT-PCR positivity after treatment is predictive of clinical relapse and a negative result is associated with disease free survival. Patients who convert to PCR positivity after a negative result are at high risk of relapse.

References:

Tobal et al (2001). Monitoring minimal residual disease and predicting relapse in APL by quantitating PML::RAR alpha transcripts with a sensitive competitive RT-PCR method. Leukemia. 15(7):1060-5.

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Gallagher RE et al. 2003. Quantitative real-time RT-PCR analysis of PML::RAR alpha mRNA in acute promyelocytic leukemia: assessment of prognostic significance in adult patients from intergroup protocol 0129. Blood;101(7):2521-8.

Grimwade 2002. The significance of minimal residual disease in patients with t(15;17).

Best Pract Res Clin Haematol;15(1):137-58. Review.

CBFB::MYH11 INV(16)

This PCR reaction is designed to detect this fusion transcript in patients with AML at presentation and for monitoring the disease.

The CBFB gene encodes a Beta subunit of translocation factor, CBFB, and alterations of CBFB are closely associated with AML. The MYH11 gene encodes the smooth muscle myosin heavy chain. The chimeric gene contains the 5 prime region of CBFB gene fused to the major region of MYH11 gene. The fusion protein impairs neutrophil development and alterations in the CBFB gene can contribute to the genesis of myelodysplasia.

The inversion of chromosome 16 (INV16) and the translocation t(16;16) is a characteristic chromosomal aberration found in the M4Eo subtype of acute myeloid leukaemia (AML). This abnormality is detected in 7-10% of de novo AML (90% of M4Eo subtype) but is not limited to this subtype. The alternative splicing of the genes result in different transcripts. The majority of individuals with AML have type A, type D and E is found in a minority.

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Factors affecting results or interpretation of translocation assays: Translocation assays are performed from RNA which is very susceptible to degradation. Fresh samples give the best results and are more likely to pass our quality control. Samples received in heparin are not amenable to PCR based analysis and can therefore not be tested for translocations by QPCR.