

Reinventing blood safety

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The NAT Laboratory of Brescia DMTE: From Drawing to Report

*Statuto Massimo, Perandin Francesca, *Manca Nino, Marini Mirella. Service of Immune Hematology and Transfusion Medicine (SIMT), *Service of Virology and Microbiological Investigations, Hospital Enterprise "Spedali Civili", Brescia, Italy*

Background:

From 31st October 2001, as provided by the Health Ministry Circular dated 10.30.2000 and Regional Council Resolution of Lombardy Region, dated 03.30.2001, we started screening for HCV-RNA by NAT of blood components collected from 5 SIMT centers (65,000 donations/year) at the Transfusion Medicine and Hematology Department (DMTE) of Brescia Province.

Materials and Methods:

Nine technicians have been trained to perform the Procleix HIV-1/HCV Assay. Three to four of these technicians operate daily in the NAT section, coordinated by an Executive Biologist. The samples are drawn in EDTA, stored at 4 °C, and transported by road service provided by Provincial AVIS, White Cross, and the different SIMT's. The NAT tubes of Brescia SIMT get to the Laboratory by 12.00 of the day of drawing, while for peripheral SIMT's the transport takes place on the same day or the next one and, in some cases, even 48 hours after the drawing. The assay is always carried out by 48 to 72 hours after the drawing. The laboratory works 5 days a week to conduct the assay sessions (2 to 6 per day). On non-working days, an operator provides for receipt, centrifugation and storage of samples drawn in the weekend. The samples from Brescia SIMT are assayed by the end of the day (on Monday to Friday) and the relevant findings are communicated by 10 hours after the drawing, while Saturday and Sunday samples are processed as from Monday.

Conclusions:

The complete management of NAT assays from the whole DMTE, from the sample receipt to the report, is done through e-mail and EmoNet-NAT, a dedicated computer system. Once elaborated by EmoNet-NAT, results are directly stored in the EmoNet management server, if relevant to Brescia SIMT, or sent by e-mail to the mailboxes of peripheral Transfusion Service.