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Standard Operating Procedure for Culture Identification and Differentiation of Bordetella species

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Protocol Information

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Summary: The appropriate use of clinically accurate diagnostic tests is essential for the detection of pertussis, a poorly controlled vaccine-preventable disease. The purpose of this study was to estimate the sensitivity and specificity of different diagnostic criteria including culture, multi-target polymerase chain reaction (PCR), anti-pertussis toxin IgG (IgG-PT) serology, and the use of a clinical case definition. An additional objective was to describe the optimal timing of specimen collection for the various tests. Clinical specimens were collected from patients with cough illness at seven locations across the United States between 2007 and 2011. Nasopharyngeal and blood specimens were collected from each patient during the enrollment visit. Patients who had been coughing for ≥ 2 weeks were asked to return in 2-4 weeks for collection of a second, convalescent blood specimen. Sensitivity and specificity of each diagnostic test were estimated using three methods—pertussis culture as the “gold standard,” composite reference standard analysis (CRS), and latent class analysis (LCA). Overall, 868 patients were enrolled and 13.6% were B. pertussis positive by at least one diagnostic test. In a sample of 545 participants with non-missing data on all four diagnostic criteria, culture was 64.0% sensitive, PCR was 90.6% sensitive, and both were 100% specific by LCA. CRS and LCA methods increased the sensitivity estimates for convalescent serology and the clinical case definition over the culture-based estimates. Culture and PCR were most sensitive when performed during the first two weeks of cough; serology was optimally sensitive after the second week of cough. Timing of specimen collection in relation to onset of illness should be considered

when ordering diagnostic tests for pertussis. Consideration should be given to including IgG-PT serology as a confirmatory test in the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) case definition for pertussis.

Associated Publications: Lee AD, Cassiday PK, Pawloski LC, Tatti KM, Martin MD, Briere EC, Tondella ML, Martin SW, obotCVSG (2018) Clinical evaluation and validation of laboratory methods for the diagnosis of *Bordetella pertussis* infection: Culture, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and anti-pertussis toxin IgG serology (IgG-PT). PLoS ONE 13(4): e0195979. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0195979](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0195979)

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