

## Are Clinical Laboratories Following ISTH Recommendations for Lupus Anticoagulant Testing? Results of a 2<sup>nd</sup> NASCOLA Survey

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Laboratory testing for lupus anticoagulant (LA) is commonly performed to evaluate individuals with thrombosis or suspected phospholipid antibody syndromes. A recent study of NASCOLA and ECAT laboratories suggested many sites were not following the 1995 International Society of Thrombosis Haemostasis (ISTH) recommendations on LA testing.

**Methods:** A 26 question, patterns-of-practice survey was developed to collect data on whether laboratories followed the 1995 ISTH recommendations on LA testing. The questionnaire was distributed, on-line, to NASCOLA members in January 2007.

**Results:** 79% (n=49/62) of NASCOLA laboratories participated. 19% who had participated in the 1st NASCOLA LA study reported having changed practices. 87% reported that their laboratory currently followed all ISTH recommendations for LA testing. Commonly used tests were: dRVVT (98%), LA sensitive APTT (88%), hexagonal phospholipid assay (67%), PNP (33%), and dilute PT (21%). All sites adhered to the recommendation to use 2 or more tests for LA, although 50% did single tests when requested. All sites complied with the recommendations to use: tests based on different principles; at least one assay with a low concentration of phospholipid; and tests to confirm LA phospholipid dependency. However compliance was less with other ISTH recommendations, as some laboratories indicated that they did not perform LA mixing studies (7%) or mixing studies for dRVVT (14%), and some did not evaluate for heparin (14%) or factor deficiencies (30%) as the cause of abnormal results. Many (57%) did not repeat LA testing using heparin-neutralized samples. 21% of sites planned to change their LA test practices after participating in this study.

**Conclusion:** While the majority of NASCOLA laboratories generally follow the 1995 ISTH recommendations for LA testing, compliance with some recommendations is poor. A significant number of laboratories do not follow some recommendations to evaluate for other coagulation abnormalities. Participation in the study had positively influenced laboratory practices.