

Covid-19 Testing Methods Bulletin No 6 – 1 June 2020

Dear Colleague

We have published five new submissions on the Testing Methods [crowdsourcing platform](#), with these having potential to contribute to the speed and efficiency of testing and open up alternative ways of testing. Recent challenges on these topics are still open and we will be sharing more submissions with potential in future bulletins.

Last week we held our third webinar for NHS labs. As well as providing updates on developments in the national strategy on testing, we used time to understand where improvement support can best help labs. We discussed barriers, enhancing end-to-end workflows and sharing information. We will update labs on support we can provide and continue this discussion at our next webinar on **9 June at 10.00 – 11.30**. We hope you can join.

Thank you for your help

Sue Hill
Chief Scientific Officer, NHS England

Jo Martin
President, Royal College of Pathologists

On behalf of the moderators' group.

NEW SOLUTIONS: Increasing end-to-end efficiency and speed of testing



Following reaching the target of delivering 100,000 tests per day by the end of April we need to continue to increase our capacity for testing.

We are looking for new methods for viral detection and identification that are high throughput and that will increase end to end efficiency and speed of testing and can be implemented and adopted quickly.

1. [Pooled samples staff monitoring in Covid-19 care areas as part of Triple lock - starve the virus \[regular COVID frontline staff screening + all inpatient admission screening + every 7 days inpatient screening\]](#)
2. Submissions covering PCR-AI: [Rapidly increase throughput by AI](#) and [PCR-AI Solution shared by Mark Zuckerman at KCH](#)
3. [Ultra High-throughput Lab Robotics Systems for RNA extraction, PCR set-up, qPCR & ELISA](#)

NEW SOLUTIONS: Alternatives to Swabs for Sampling



One of the significant constraints on current testing capacity is availability of swabs for sampling. We asked for alternative non-swab based methods or techniques of sampling for the virus that have been used in other applications or contexts and that can be implemented rapidly. Examples could be, but not limited to, use of saliva, faeces and potentially urine, as well as non-blood based sample collection for antibody testing.

4. [CE Marked Saliva Collection device with sample protection and inactivation](#)

NEW SOLUTIONS: Transport media that inactivates the virus



In order to increase laboratory throughput we are looking at ways to minimise processes including the need to handle test samples in Category 2+/3 facilities. We are looking for transport media solutions that inactivate the virus reliably or do not add significant steps to the laboratory process or impact on viral detection.

5. [Viral inactivation media virusPHIX RNA stabilisation and virus inactivation sample collections tubes](#)