M15-A
Vol. 20 No. 12

Replaces M15-T
Vol. 12 No. 15

Laboratory Diagnosis of Blood-borne Parasitic Diseases; Approved Guideline

This document provides guidance on specimen collection, optimum timing for preparing blood films, blood film preparations, staining procedures, examination of specimens, and identification of parasites.

A guideline for global application developed through the NCCLS consensus process.

NCCLS...

Serving the World's Medical Science Community Through Voluntary Consensus

NCCLS is an international, interdisciplinary, nonprofit, standards-developing, and educational organization that promotes the development and use of voluntary consensus standards and guidelines within the healthcare community. It is recognized worldwide for the application of its unique consensus process in the development of standards and guidelines for patient testing and related healthcare issues. NCCLS is based on the principle that consensus is an effective and cost-effective way to improve patient testing and healthcare services.

In addition to developing and promoting the use of voluntary consensus standards and guidelines, NCCLS provides an open and unbiased forum to address critical issues affecting the quality of patient testing and health care.

PUBLICATIONS

An NCCLS document is published as a standard, guideline, or committee report.

Standard A document developed through the consensus process that clearly identifies specific, essential requirements for materials, methods, or practices for use in an unmodified form. A standard may, in addition, contain discretionary elements, which are clearly identified.

Guideline A document developed through the consensus process describing criteria for a general operating practice, procedure, or material for voluntary use. A guideline may be used as written or modified by the user to fit specific needs.

Report A document that has not been subjected to consensus review and is released by the Board of Directors.

CONSENSUS PROCESS

The NCCLS voluntary consensus process is a protocol establishing formal criteria for:

- the authorization of a project
- the development and open review of documents
- the revision of documents in response to comments by users
- the acceptance of a document as a consensus standard or guideline.

Most NCCLS documents are subject to two levels of consensus—"proposed" and "approved." Depending on the need for field evaluation or data collection, documents may also be made available for review at an intermediate (i.e., "tentative") consensus level.

Proposed An NCCLS consensus document undergoes the first stage of review by the healthcare community as a proposed standard or guideline. The document should receive a wide and thorough technical review, including an overall review of its scope, approach, and utility, and a line-by-line review of its technical and editorial content.

Tentative A tentative standard or guideline is made available for review and comment only when a recommended method has a well-defined need for a field evaluation or when a recommended protocol requires that specific data be collected. It should be reviewed to ensure its utility.

Approved An approved standard or guideline has achieved consensus within the healthcare community. It should be reviewed to assess the utility of the final document, to ensure attainment of consensus (i.e., that comments on earlier versions have been satisfactorily addressed), and to identify the need for additional consensus documents.

NCCLS standards and guidelines represent a consensus opinion on good practices and reflect the substantial agreement by materially affected, competent, and interested parties obtained by following NCCLS's established consensus procedures. Provisions in NCCLS standards and guidelines may be more or less stringent than applicable regulations. Consequently, conformance to this voluntary consensus document does not relieve the user of responsibility for compliance with applicable regulations.

COMMENTS

The comments of users are essential to the consensus process. Anyone may submit a comment, and all comments are addressed, according to the consensus process, by the NCCLS committee that wrote the document. All comments, including those that result in a change to the document when published at the next consensus level and those that do not result in a change, are responded to by the committee in an appendix to the document. Readers are strongly encouraged to comment in any form and at any time on any NCCLS document. Address comments to the NCCLS Executive Offices, 940 West Valley Road, Suite 1400, Wayne, PA 19087, USA.

VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Healthcare professionals in all specialties are urged to volunteer for participation in NCCLS projects. Please contact the NCCLS Executive Offices for additional information on committee participation.

Laboratory Diagnosis of Blood-borne Parasitic Diseases; Approved Guideline

Abstract

NCCLS document M15-A— *Laboratory Diagnosis of Blood-borne Parasitic Diseases; Approved Guideline*, presents instructions for preparation of thick and thin blood films, the appropriate use of stains, and methods to assist in the diagnosis of many parasitic diseases. Procedures for blood collection by skin puncture and venipuncture, techniques for preparing films for blood parasite examination, and steps for preparing Giemsa stain and other reagents, including a special stain for microfilariae, are provided. The optimum times for preparing blood films for five particular parasites—*Plasmodium* species (malaria), *Babesia* species, *Trypanosoma cruzi* (Chagas' disease), African trypanosomiasis, and filariasis—are identified and explained. A thorough list of blood film examination supplies is included. Basic guidelines and reference materials for the identification of blood parasites are given.

Other than babesiosis, vector-transmitted, blood-borne parasitic diseases are not endemic to temperate climates. However, laboratories may be called upon to detect and identify an etiological agent in suspected infections. This document is, therefore, useful for the performance of such laboratory procedures.

NCCLS. *Laboratory Diagnosis of Blood-borne Parasitic Diseases; Approved Guideline*. NCCLS document M15-A (ISBN 1-56238-401-5). NCCLS, 940 West Valley Road, Suite 1400, Wayne, Pennsylvania 19087-1898 USA, 2000

M15-A
ISBN 1-56238-401-5
ISSN 0273-3099

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Volume 20 Number 12

Lynne S. Garcia, M.S., F(AAM), Chairholder
Sandra L. Bullock-Iacullo, Dr.P.H.
Thomas R. Fritsche, M.D., Ph.D.
Katharine K. Grady, MT(ASCP), M.M.Sc.
George R. Healy, Ph.D.
Josephine Palmer, A.R.T.
Marianna Wilson, M.S.
Johnson Wong

Suggested Citation

(NCCLS. *Laboratory Diagnosis of Blood-borne Parasitic Diseases; Approved Guideline.* NCCLS document M15-A [ISBN 1-56238-401-5]. NCCLS, 940 West Valley Road, Suite 1400, Wayne, Pennsylvania 19087-1898 USA, 2000.)

Proposed Guideline
May 1990

Tentative Guideline
August 1992

Approved Guideline
June 2000

ISBN 1-56238-401-5
ISSN 0273-3099

Committee Membership

Area Committee on Microbiology

James H. Jorgensen, Ph.D. **Chairholder**	**University of Texas Health Science Center** **San Antonio, Texas**
Melvin P. Weinstein, M.D. **Vice-Chairholder**	**Robert Wood Johnson Medical School** **New Brunswick, New Jersey**

Subcommittee on Parasitology

Lynne S. Garcia, M.S., F(AAM) **Chairholder**	**Diagnostic Medical Parasitology** **Santa Monica, California**
Thomas R. Fritsche, M.D., Ph.D.	University of Washington Seattle, Washington
Katharine K. Grady, M.T.(ASCP), M.M.Sc.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Atlanta, Georgia
George R. Healy, Ph.D.	Consultant Decatur, Georgia
Andy Rocha	Medical Chemical Corporation Torrance, California
Marianna Wilson, M.S.	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Atlanta, Georgia
Johnson Wong	Evergreen Scientific Los Angeles, California

Advisors

David A. Bruckner, Sc.D.	UCLA Medical Center Los Angeles, California
Sandra L. Bullock-Iacullo, Dr. P.H.	State of Georgia Snellville, Georgia
Bradley E. Copeland, M.D.	University of Cincinnati Medical Center Cincinnati, Ohio
Paul L. Crede	State Public Health Laboratory Jefferson City, Missouri
William T. Dill, Ph.D.	Blackburn Laboratory Washington, District of Columbia
Estolle Gross	Hope, Indiana