

Revised 7/28/03

ARBOVIRAL/WEST NILE TESTING PROTOCOL

During the 1999 outbreak, two-thirds of the encephalitis cases were associated with severe muscle weakness. Documentation of muscle weakness was based on neurological examination and/or EMG findings. Therefore, case ascertainment should include meningitis or encephalitis with muscle weakness.

CRITERIA FOR SERUM TESTING FOR WNV

1. Any patient with **suspected viral encephalitis or** (criteria a, b and c below)
 - a. Fever >38.0C or 101F (most patients with West Nile disease had higher fevers),
 - b. Altered mental status (altered level of consciousness, agitation, lethargy) and/or other evidence of cortical involvement (e.g. focal neurological findings, seizures),
 - c. Cerebrospinal fluid pleocytosis with lymphocytes predominating and/or elevated protein and a negative gram stain and culture, **with or without**
 - d. Muscle weakness (especially flaccid paralysis) confirmed by neurological Exam or EMG.

2. Any patient having fever, altered mental status, cerebrospinal fluid pleocytosis and muscle weakness.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION OF SPECIMEN AND TEST RESULT NOTIFICATION

Testing of serum and cerebrospinal fluid from patients for WNV will be performed at the Arkansas Department of Health Laboratory in Little Rock. Specimens testing positive are re-tested in the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) laboratory to confirm the initial result.

SUBMISSION FORM

Please include a completed Miscellaneous Specimen Submission Form (HL-06) for each patient. We must have the date of onset of symptoms and the date the specimen was collected. Request "arboviral panel."

SPECIMEN TYPES AND AMOUNTS

Serum and/or CSF(if available) should be sent as soon as available. Please send at least 2.0 ml of serum and at least 1.0 ml of CSF for testing to proceed. **Whole blood is acceptable; serum is preferred.**

REPORTING OF TEST RESULTS

Negative test results will normally be available 4-6 working days after receipt of a specimen. During heavy times of submission, turn-around times may be longer. Serologic testing will be performed using the IgM capture ELISA. If the initial results are positive, the sample is retested at ADH to confirm the initial result.

RESULT NOTIFICATION

Arkansas Department of Health will notify the submitter by mail regarding test results. Physicians of record will be notified by fax of positive results.