

Introduction

As many of you are aware the ownership of Vetnostics has changed with the acquisition of Symbion Health by Primary Health Care which operates SDS. In the latter part of the year the two Sydney laboratories will be combined within the present Symbion Laverty Pathology site at North Ryde. The laboratory merger will have no impact on our veterinary services. In fact positive outcomes are expected in the Sydney area as a more extensive courier service should allow quicker delivery of samples to our laboratory, a broader test menu and a streamlining of workflows to deliver a more consistent service. In addition we will be able to expand our service to more country areas.

The commitment of Primary Healthcare to the veterinary pathology business can be seen in the employment of additional pathologists and plans for further expansion of our existing services in Victoria and Queensland. This will ensure a major presence in all Eastern States as well as in WA through Vetpath. We will now have a team of 14 clinical pathologists and anatomic pathologists (see below) and two registrar pathologists undergoing training. We will continue with our internal veterinary medicine consultants.

During this year two new pathologists (Brett Stone, commenced June, David Taylor, starting 4 August) and a trainee pathologist (Matthew Silverstein, February) are expanding the Vetnostics team. As well as supporting the training of future pathologists in-house, Vetnostics continues to support a resident in veterinary pathology at the University of Queensland.

The commitment to the veterinary profession will continue through our support of research projects within Universities as well as within our own laboratories using the enormous clinical case information available. We hope to continue our seminar program (see below). We will continue supporting our testing of Delta Pet Partner dogs, the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital and offering a discount for staff of our regular veterinary users. Feedback has indicated that access to our medicine consultants is greatly valued in investigating and treating cases as well as assisting in deciding whether cases can be adequately handled in-house or when they should be referred on. We are therefore pleased to confirm that access to our internal veterinary medical consultants will be expanded.

We believe that Vetnostics is the longest serving laboratory. It has a tradition of aiming to provide an ever improving service as evidenced by the continual expansion of available tests in-house and employment of increasing numbers of pathologists. We have the most comprehensive range of

in-house companion animal laboratory tests with competitive prices. Our excellent relationship with University researchers and support of research programs is further indication of our commitment to the development of the profession and its ability to provide the best testing for animals in their care. For these reasons and with our 7 day/week service , rapid turnaround of results and the team of experienced pathologists we hope to remain or become your pathology provider.

New Tests & Test Alterations

Canine Geriatric Profile

Vetnostics has introduced a geriatric profile in addition to its wellness profile for general health check in the older animal. Included in the test profile: FBC exclusive of a differential, urea, creatinine, glucose, total protein, albumin, globulin, ALT, ALP, Ca, Phos and trig

Cost: \$54.00 (Excl. GST)

Mycobacterium & Nocardia Identification

After initial culture and an indication that one of these organisms is present, culture plates are sent to the Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory for further identification and if required sensitivity determination.

Cost:

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|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Initial culture (up to 2 months) | \$35.00 (Excl. GST) |
| 2. Identification of organism | \$60.00 (Excl. GST) |
| 3. Sensitivities | \$55.00 (Excl. GST) |

Equine Health & Fitness Profile

Magnesium will now be included in this profile

Equine Uterine & Clitoral Swabs

A decreased cost has been introduced if both samples are submitted

Cost: \$71.00 (Excl. GST)

Urine Cytology*

As we have been receiving increasing requests for cytological examination of urine samples we have introduced a Urinalysis plus Cytology panel

Cost: \$52.00 (Excl. GST)

*Preparation of smears/slides from concentrated unfixed urine at the time of sampling minimising morphologic changes, results in superior cell preservation and allows for a more accurate cytological assessment

New Pathologists

Dr. David Taylor

BVSc, Diplomate ACVP

Dr. David Taylor, BVSc, Diplomate ACVP will join the pathology staff at Symbion Vetnostics in August. David received his BVSc from the University of Sydney in 1990. He spent the next few years in New South Wales and Victoria broadening his experience in private practice, university and government positions until he joined the Animal Health Laboratory in Launceston in 1998 as a veterinary pathologist. In 2001 David moved to the University of Florida for residency training in anatomic pathology. Following the two year residency, he was appointed as a clinical assistant professor in anatomic pathology and he was board certified in veterinary pathology in September 2004. While at the University of Florida, David was a consultant pathologist for the dermatology and ophthalmology services, coordinated a dermatopathology biopsy service and served as anatomic pathology residency coordinator. His professional interests include dermatopathology, ophthalmic pathology and oncopathology. He also enjoys clinical research, writing and collaborating with clinicians on interesting and challenging cases. In his spare time, he enjoys swimming, digital photography, digital retouching and art. With his wife Jacqui and children Hannah and Ben, he is looking forward to spending time with family and settling back into Australia.



Dr. Brett Stone

B.VSc(Hons) B.Biomed.Sc(Hons) MACVSc

Prior to commencing BVSc studies, Brett completed a Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences with Class I Honours at James Cook University of North Queensland. His honours research was in the field of Microbiology and Immunology and focused on the detection of *Helicobacter pylori* in domestic cats. Brett graduated as a veterinarian



from the University of QLD with Class I Honours in 2001 and worked in mixed animal practice on the outskirts of Brisbane for two years before returning to The University of QLD to undertake an internship/residency funded by QML Vetnostics in veterinary pathology. As a pathology intern Brett also concurrently undertook a research masters project investigating the colonisation and excretion of *E.coli* serotype O157 in adult cattle. In 2006, after completing the internship, Brett lectured in clinical pathology at The University of QLD, was a contracted pathologist at QML Vetnostics and he attained membership qualifications with the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists in Veterinary Pathology. In 2007-2008, Brett worked as a diagnostic pathologist at Cytopath Ltd in the UK and commenced Fellowship training in clinical pathology. This practice run by ex Australian pathologist Chris Belford has an extensive throughput of cytology allowing Brett to gain extensive experience in this area as well as anatomic pathology. Brett's experience in cytology and interests in immunohistochemistry and microbiology will allow further development of these in QML Vetnostics.

Matthew Silverstein

BVSc(Hons)

Matthew completed his veterinary science degree in Queensland in 2002. After this time he worked in private small animal practice around NSW and Victoria over a two year period. Following this he pursued his interests in veterinary pathology by undertaking an internship at the University of Sydney Rural Veterinary Clinic in Camden. During this period he had a wide exposure to all facets of pathology in small and large animals and valuable microbiology training. He then continued on to a training program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in clinical pathology. This was a great opportunity to learn from very experienced people within this field and to experience life overseas. He has now become a registrar in veterinary clinical pathology at Symbion Vetnostics and preparing for membership of the Australian College of Veterinary Scientists.



OTHER SYMBION VETNOSTICS PATHOLOGISTS (Further details on Vetnostics web site)

David Snow

BSc(Vet)DVSc PhD MRCVS Clinical pathologist and Chief Veterinary Pathologist (Eastern States)

Bruce Duff

BVSc Dip Vet Path MComm. AFAIM (Clinical Pathologist)

Angela Begg

BVSc Dip.Vet Path. PhD (General Pathologist)

George Reppas

*BVSc Dip.Vet.Path FACVSc (General Pathologist)
DipI.ECVP MRCVS (Anatomic Pathology)*

Dr Terry Rothwell

DVSc PhD MACVSc (Consultant Anatomic Pathologist)

Prof. Rolfe C Howlett

BVSc PhD MACVSc MRCVS (Consultant Anatomic Pathologist)

Dr Ken Mason

BVSc MVSc FACVSc (Consultant Dermatohistopathologist)

VETERINARY MEDICAL CONSULTANTS

Dr Sue Foster

BVSc M.Vet.Clin.Stud. FACVSc (Feline Specialist)

Dr Martine Perkins

BVSc MACVSc (Canine Medicine)

Dr Richard Malik

DVSc PhD Dip Vet Anaesth M Vet Clin Stud FACVSc (Feline Medicine) FASM

VETPATH

Dr John Jardine

BVSc MMVet (Path) Dip ACVP MRCVS (Head, General Pathologist)

Dr Sue Beetson

BSc(Hons) BVMS PhD (Clinical Pathologist)

Dr Mary McConnell

BVSc Grad Dip Clin Path PhD (Clinical Pathologist)

Dr Leanne Twomey

BSc BVMS PhD DipACVP (Clinical Pathologist)

Dr Jenny Hill

BVSc DipACVP (Clinical Pathologist)

Seminars

We will be holding no seminars in 2008 however we would like to continue these in 2009 but this will largely depend on the response we will receive from a questionnaire to be circulated later in the year. Although our seminars have been very well received by those attending them last year, two had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. We have tried to put these on at convenient times, presenting them in regional areas and charging low prices using excellent speakers as well as giving younger researchers the opportunity to present. However some feedback has indicated that vets are being inundated with continuing education (or as now known as professional development programs). Although we hold these seminars as part of our continuing commitment to the profession rather than for promotion of pathology, continuation is pointless if these are not well attended.

Web Site

Our new site outlined in our previous newsletter can now be accessed. It now has a number of new features that will allow you to do ordering of supplies, request pads etc on line. In addition it has a description including specimen required for most available tests. Details on performing certain tests eg ACTH stim test and our newsletters will become available.



UPDATES:

Phenobarbitone and effects on triglyceride levels

Over the past 4 years Symbion Vetnostics Laboratory has been running concurrent triglyceride (TG) levels with each phenobarbitone (PB) assay in dogs. This was a background study as part of a PhD research project conducted at Sydney University, which was aiming to determine the following;

- *The prevalence of epileptic dogs on chronic PB with hypertriglyceridaemia*
- *The mechanism/s behind hypertriglyceridaemia*
- *The significance of hypertriglyceridaemia*

From this research, approximately 30% of dogs studied on chronic PB had elevated fasting TG's. In addition, three dogs with normal fasting TGs prior to PB use, developed severely elevated fasting TGs (> 40 mmol/L) within 1 month of initiating PB therapy. Although the exact mechanism for this is unknown, it is likely due to an increase in hepatic TG production due to PB induction, which in some dogs appears transient. Many dogs on PB are also overweight which can lead to insulin resistance, another cause of increased TG levels. Obesity in combination with an increased hepatic TG production is the likely cause for the fasting hypertriglyceridaemia seen in many dogs on PB therapy.

As we suspect PB has a direct effect on raising serum TG levels, baseline fasting TG levels prior to commencing PB and regular monitoring of TG with PB drug levels throughout therapy should become a standard part of treatment in epileptic dogs. In most epileptic dogs with elevated TG levels and no evidence of concurrent disease, weight loss (if overweight) and a low fat diet should be sufficient to lower TG levels. Hypertriglyceridaemia in dogs can lead to vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, pancreatitis and even seizures, although it is unlikely this is the underlying cause for idiopathic epilepsy.

In dogs that have been fasted for approx. 14-16 hours, the reference range for fasting triglycerides is 0.3 – 1.7 mmol/L. There are many factors such as diet and concurrent disease (e.g. hyperadrenocorticism, hypothyroidism, diabetes) that influence both fasting and post-prandial TG levels in dogs, however as a rough guide, peak TG levels after eating should not exceed 5.0 mmol/L.

If you require further information or wish to discuss specific cases please contact the researcher involved Elissa Kluger 0410572966 or ekluger@vetresearch.net

Cross Matching

Prior to transfusion recipients should be ideally crossmatched with the prospective donor(s).

This is particularly vital if the transfusion is not the recipient's first so as to prevent an acute haemolytic reaction, which may be fatal, due to the presence of alloantibodies.

The crossmatch includes a major and minor component. The major crossmatch involves testing the recipient's plasma with the donor's RBCs. The minor crossmatch involves testing the recipient's RBCs with the donor's plasma. The major crossmatch should always be compatible otherwise the recipient will destroy the transfused RBCs. The minor crossmatch is of less significance.

Blood grouping is useful in donor selection for dogs and essential in donor selection for cats. However, even when group specific blood is to be transfused, a crossmatch should be performed as not all red cell antigens have been identified. We perform DEA 1.1 typing for dogs and A/B typing for cats.

Crossmatching does not preclude transfusion reactions that may be caused by WBCs or platelets.

Required Samples

Canine: A minimum of 2 mls EDTA blood from the recipient and each donor.

Feline: A minimum of 3 mls EDTA from the recipient and each donor.

Please ensure that all samples are clearly identified.

Prices

Cross Match with one donor \$52 + GST

Additional donors/animal \$25 + GST

Typing of each cat or dog \$36 + GST (discount over normal price)

New Price List

We have reviewed our price list (enclosed) and have made adjustments. Our in house tests have increased in line with CPI. Some of the increases in tests that have to be sent to external laboratories have had more of an increase to reflect the costs of transport (especially frozen samples). Vetnostics still remains extremely cost competitive to other laboratories. As a policy we try to keep our sendaway tests as low priced as possible (compare with our competitors) so as to allow veterinarians to investigate their often interesting cases as comprehensively as possible. This list which includes 95% of tests or our fully comprehensive list including less frequently requested tests can be e-mailed as an Excel file to you. Please contact Sandra Morgan in accounts on **9005 7050** or sandra.morgan@symbionhealth.com

