



Is basal ultrasensitive measurement of calcitonin capable of substituting for the pentagastrin-stimulation test?

Submitted by a.bergoend on Wed, 04/29/2015 - 15:44

Titre	Is basal ultrasensitive measurement of calcitonin capable of substituting for the pentagastrin-stimulation test?
Type de publication	Article de revue
Auteur	Pina, Géraldine [1], Dubois, Séverine [2], Murat, Arnaud [3], Berger, Nicole [4], Niccoli, Patricia [5], Peix, Jean-Louis [6], Cohen, Régis [7], Guillausseau, Claudine [8], Charrie, Anne [9], Chabre, Olivier [10], Cornu, Catherine [11], Borson-Chazot, Françoise [12], Rohmer, Vincent [13], Groupe français des tumeurs endocrines [14]
Editeur	Wiley
Type	Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture
Année	2013
Langue	Anglais
Date	2013 Mar
Pagination	358-64
Volume	78
Titre de la revue	Clinical Endocrinology
ISSN	1365-2265
Mots-clés	Adolescent [15], Adult [16], Aged [17], Aged, 80 and over [18], Calcitonin [19], Carcinoma, Medullary [20], Child [21], Child, Preschool [22], Female [23], Humans [24], Male [25], Middle Aged [26], Multiple Endocrine Neoplasia Type 2a [27], Pentagastrin [28], Prospective Studies [29], Thyroid Neoplasms [30], Young Adult [31]

OBJECTIVE: To evaluate a second-generation assay for basal serum calcitonin (CT) measurements compared with the pentagastrin-stimulation test for the diagnosis of inherited medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC) and the follow-up of patients with MTC after surgery. Recent American Thyroid Association recommendations suggest the use of basal CT alone to diagnose and assess follow-up of MTC as the pentagastrin (Pg) test is unavailable in many countries.

DESIGN: Multicentric prospective study.

PATIENTS: A total of 162 patients with basal CT <10 ng/l were included: 54 asymptomatic patients harboured noncysteine 'rearranged during transfection' (RET) proto-oncogene mutations and 108 patients had entered follow-up of MTC after surgery.

MEASUREMENT: All patients underwent basal and Pg-stimulated CT measurements using a second-generation assay with 5-ng/l functional sensitivity.

RESULTS: Ninety-five per cent of patients with basal CT \geq 5 ng/l and 25% of patients with basal CT <5 ng/l had a positive Pg-stimulation test (Pg CT >10 ng/l). Compared with the reference Pg test, basal CT \geq 5 ng/l had 99% specificity, a 95%-positive predictive value but only 35% sensitivity ($P < 0.0001$). Overall, there were 31% less false-negative results using a 5-ng/l threshold for basal CT instead of the previously used 10-ng/l threshold.

CONCLUSION: The ultrasensitive CT assay reduces the false-negative rate of basal CT measurements when diagnosing familial MTC and in postoperative follow-up compared with previously used assays. However, its sensitivity to detect C-cell disease remains lower than that of the Pg-stimulation test.

Résumé en
anglais

URL de la
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<http://okina.univ-angers.fr/publications/ua10549> [32]

DOI

10.1111/cen.12001 [33]

Lien vers le
document

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/cen.12001> [33]

Titre abrégé

Clin. Endocrinol. (Oxf)

Identifiant (ID)
PubMed

22913268 [34]

Liens

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