



NEHODS NEWSLETTER



NEHODS - Northern England Haemato-Oncology Diagnostic Service

Winter 2024

NE-HO-HO-HODS at Christmas

It's not just Santa's elves who work hard over the festive period.

Processing cut off: 24th December @ 3pm

We need to receive samples in NEHODS by 3pm Tuesday 24th December to process them same day, any later and these won't be processed until the 27th. We are closed bank holidays. If anything is urgent please contact us! 0191 282 5078

Website

The brand-new Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals laboratory website, which includes dedicated pages for NEHODS will go live on 13th January 2025. Please continue to use our current web address as this will redirect you when it goes live:

<https://www.newcastlelaboratories.com/>

Weekend Service

We run a voluntary weekend/bank holiday service for emergencies that cannot wait until the next working day. Samples that will be processed include those where the result would have a significant impact on treatment e.g. needing to start chemotherapy over the weekend.

The general process is to contact the consultant on call at Newcastle (via the Newcastle Hospitals switchboard (Telephone: 0191 233 6161) and they will have a copy of the NEHODS consultant on call rota. This should be done before the sample is taken.

The NEHODS consultant will discuss the case and arrange testing as required. This applies to liquid samples is generally only available in the morning and it is the referrer's responsibility to ensure samples arrive urgently. There is no routine trephine/lymph node service at the weekend without prior discussion/arrangement.

New classifications

As you will be aware there are differing classifications from the WHO and also ICC. The WHO has recently published their updated version. It is a mammoth task to change the way HaemoSys looks, but over the coming months we hope to move from the revised fourth edition to the fifth edition of WHO and incorporate differences in ICC when diagnoses may be slightly different.

Staffing

We are pleased to announce that as of November 2024 Dr Caroline Shrubsole has been appointed as a substantive consultant haematologist at Newcastle. She will be covering the flow lab and reporting bone marrow trephines and will work Tuesday to Friday.

We are all delighted to have Caroline joining us a permanent member of the team.



Contacts

NEHODS Clinical Lead

Dr Andrew McGregor, Consultant Haematologist

akmcgregor@nhs.net 0191 213 8482

NEHODS Operational Manager

Chris Kettle

c.kettle@nhs.net 0191 9177446

Flow Cytometry

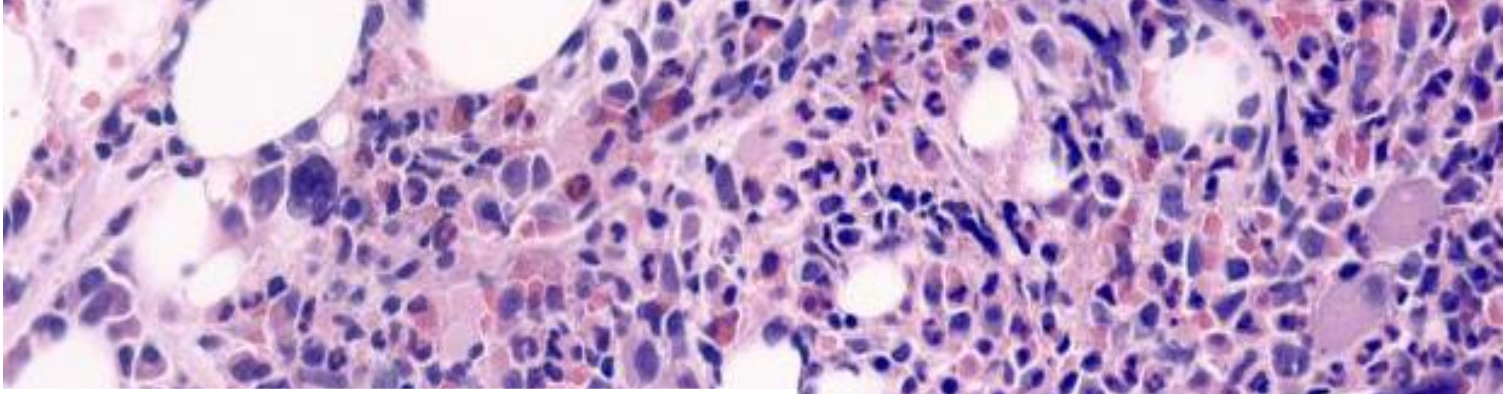
Helen Watson, Head of Flow Cytometry

helen.watson9@nhs.net 0191 282 5078

Genetics

Gavin Cuthbert, Newcastle Genetics, Lead Cancer Scientist

gavin.cuthbert@nhs.net



Bionano project

We are pleased to announce that thanks to the support of Newcastle Hospitals Charity, Newcastle Genetics will shortly be setting up a Bionano Stratys device - to test it on our region's Acute Myeloid Leukaemia samples.



The Bionano Stratys - <https://bionano.com/stratys-systems/> - uses a novel technology called optical genome mapping (OGM) and has the potential to replace FISH, karyotyping, SNP array and RNA fusion panel in AML with a single 'cytogenetic' test which could be reported in 3 days. We are excited to be the first centre in the UK to test this instrument and will keep you all informed on the progress of the project.

IDH1 testing

still on AML - can we remind everyone that rapid testing for the *IDH1*R132 is now included in our NEHODS AML Agena assay to allow you to identify patients eligible for Ivosidenib with azacitidine (<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA979>)

In all AML patients you will receive two urgent molecular genetics reports

- firstly the *FLT3*-ITD/*NPM1* test using DNA fragment analysis.
- secondly the Agena *FLT3*-TKD assay - which now also includes testing for the *IDH1*R132 variant.

Cellular Pathology

In 2023 the whole of the Cellular Pathology lab moved from their current location to allow for fire remedial works to the building. This meant that different elements of Cellular Pathology were not co-located but despite logistical issues the laboratory coped remarkably well.

There will be a multi-step return process to the New Victoria Wing starting in December 2024 and completion expected in February 2025.

Contact phone numbers, email address, and mailing address for Cell Path remain unchanged. If you have any questions about the move, please contact the team on 0191 282 4445 or email tnu-tr.CellularPathologySecretaries@nhs.net

NEHODS reaches double figures

NEHODS celebrated a milestone birthday at the Northern Region Haematologists Group, which was held at The Mining Institute in Newcastle on 28th November.



The event was attended by over 50 guests who were treated to a historical review of NEHODS from Peter, as well as a haematological adaptations of festive chart toppers. Helen Watson and debutant Caroline performed an entertaining and interactive review of five cases. Gavin and Haz provided updates on developments from the world of Genetics, including details of Optical Genome Mapping that could potentially revolutionise cancer genetics and is summarised in this newsletter.

Excellent presentations were also provided by Dr Despina Televantou, Dr Andrew McGregor and from our out of region presenters, Dr Richard Dillon and Dr Tom Butler.

The celebrations concluded with a well-attended meal at Sachins.



NORTHERN REGION HAEMATOLOGISTS GROUP

NEHODS 10th anniversary update: what's new in haematology diagnostics?

Thursday 28 November 2024, 13:00 – 19:00

The Common Room (The Mining Institute), Neville Hall, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1SE

12:45		Welcome		
12:45	13:45	Buffet lunch		
13:45	13:50	Introduction		Dr Andrew McGregor Consultant haematologist
13:50	14:00	NEHODS history – from individual singers to a choir		Dr Peter Carey Consultant haematologist
14:00	14:20	Flow cytometry for diagnosis of haematological malignancy		Ms Helen Watson Healthcare scientist, flow cytometry
14:20	14:40	SNP array and use in haematology malignancy diagnosis		Ms Angharad Goodman Clinical Scientist, cancer genetics
14:40	15:20	Using MRD to manage patients with AML		Dr Richard Dillon Consultant haematologist
15:20	15:50	Tea		
15:50	16:20	Laboratory and clinical diagnostic approach to polycythaemia		Dr Andrew McGregor Consultant haematologist
16:20	16:50	Interesting morphology cases		Dr Caroline Shrubsole Consultant haematologist
16:50	17:20	How can genetics help with diagnosis and prognosis of lymphoma?		Dr Despina Televantou Consultant histopathologist
17:20	17:40	Using optical genome mapping as new standard of care in AML		Mr Gavin Cuthbert Clinical Scientist, cancer genetics
17:40	18:10	Specialist Integrated Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service (SIHMDS) – past, present and future		Dr Tom Butler Consultant haematologist
18:10	18:15	Discussion and questions		Dr Andrew McGregor Consultant haematologist
18:15	Drinks			
19:15	Close			



NEHODS User Survey – You said we did

Thank you again to those who responded to the NEHODS user survey last year. In order to continue to demonstrate the service improvements we are making, updates to the key themes from the survey and from comments received are shown below.

Key theme	Updates
Most had not seen the user guide despite it being circulated the week before (to the same distribution list)	The NEHODS user guide had been revised and distributed prior to the 2023 user and it was surprising that some respondents stated they had not seen it. The document is reviewed periodically and reissued when changes are made. The user guide can be found on the NEHODS website and will also be present on the updated website, which is due to be available on 13th January 2025.
The NEHODS website was useful	The NEHODS website required updating as part of a more general this revision should address the users that did not find the website previously useful.
Most agreed that the HaemoSys interface met their needs and the request form is suitable.	We have used HaemoSys over the 10 years since NEHODS was created. We regularly review our suppliers and have not yet found a system that can meet our needs as well as HaemoSys does. If you encounter any issues with HaemoSys please contact us directly.
There was some split opinions about how to obtain urgent advice out of hours.	The process on how to access urgent NEHODS advice was updated in the NEHODS User Guide: “This service is accessed by contacting the consultant haematologist for general/laboratory haematology on call through the Newcastle Hospitals switchboard (0191 2336161). This should be done before the sample is taken. The on-call haematologist will contact a nominated NEHODS haematologist who can coordinate weekend urgent flow cytometry and genetics work. “
The MDT support provided by NEHODS is well received	No improvements were suggested at this time for the support NEHODS provides to the MDT and we continue to strive to provide the best integrated care for our patients.
The integrated report meets users’ clinical needs	We are currently undertaking a gap analysis against the NICE NGS47 Haematological Cancers Improving Outcomes guidelines to ensure that we continue to be compliant with these guidelines, where possible.
Our users feel that enquiries are dealt with in a prompt and professional manner, with good communication	We continue to ensure our staff answer enquiries in a prompt and professional manner.
Turnaround time feedback appears divided from the responses, but all respondents were happy with the TATs for urgent samples	Following the divided responses related to the expected turnaround times relating to the elements of the NEHODS service we are reviewing our processes relating to Key Performance Indicators and ensuring these are discussed at appropriate meetings and reviewed periodically.
Most respondents were happy with our services (flow, genomics, trephines and lymph nodes), however, there was some dissatisfaction with genomic turnaround times	

NEHODS User Survey – You said we did: your comments

Your comments	Our Response
I think NEHODS is a well-functioning team. I know some tests results take a few weeks due to the nature of the test. They communicate any changes in service and tests in a timely fashion. I'm not sure I have suggestions. Many thanks for the excellent work the team puts in.	Thank you for the kind comments and for understanding that some tests take longer than others to get a result.
The only issue I ever have is that I'm sometimes unsure who to contact as results are sent from various accounts. I think we end up emailing Andrew as a result! So perhaps a generic enquiry email address, or if this exists is there a 'contact page' to ensure we contact the right people?	We do have the following generic email accounts: nuth.cancer.genomics@nhs.net nuth.NEHODS@nhs.net
Is there a way of linking in the national genetic testing results - I've sent several tests away this year for their panels and so far haven't got anything back and have no idea if the samples arrived or are in progress or even an ETA for results.	It sounds like this relates to testing for rare disease e.g. inherited cytopenia syndromes or inherited bleeding disorders. Unfortunately these do tend to have a long turnaround time. As these are tests related to inherited disease they are out of our control. We suggest contacting our GLH here: https://ney-genomics.org.uk/contact/
Make HaemoSys easier to use so tests can be directly requested so staff don't miss off any requests. Ensure all samples which are sent to the Genomic hub are requestable through NEHODS	If you are struggling with any aspect of Haemosys please email us at nuth.nehods@nhs.net In these situations please email these details to nuth.nehods@nhs.net and these can be added to the case whilst still active and any missing requests can be added to the case whilst still active. All tests on the cancer test directory relating to haematological malignancy are available via NEHODS. In some of these cases the wet work is done in another part of the region but these are still reported by the genetics team at NEHODS. If you have any particular examples please provide these.
Up to date contact numbers for the service.	The most up to date contact details can always be found on the NEHODS website under "Contact Us".
More rapid turnover please.	We are constantly striving to improve our service. Our review of TATs and KPIs will ensure that these are regularly reviewed and actions taken to improve these, where possible.
Some tests like BCR domain mutations are sent to London and take weeks before we get the results, wish that can be done locally with shorter turn around times	This is something that we are always looking into developing in house however, it is sometimes necessary to continue to send samples to reference centres.
The final integrated report is usually very useful, but is sometimes not available on NEHODS WEBSITE	We would not publish reports to the NEHODS website. The integrated report can be found on HaemoSys. Should you encounter any issues with results please contact us directly.
Occasionally samples rejected without clinician being informed.	Samples are rarely rejected but when they are this can be due them being unlabelled. In these situations, the referring laboratory are more likely to be contacted. Please contact us should this arise in future and we will investigate.
Most of the time reports are useful - however there needs to be a system where the referring hospital can enter the clinical background data as sometimes the results need to be interpreted in the context of the clinical picture and this bit is missing If samples are going to be sent up directly from the lab there won't be a clinician filling in the forms apart from the initial test request boxes	In these situations please email these details to nuth.nehods@nhs.net and these can be added to the case whilst still active.
NGS etc. take much too long to come back.	NGS is a complicated and labour intensive test and this is reflected in the BPG guidelines for TATs. We understand your frustrations here but issue these results as soon as we can.