

Overview

Useful For

Evaluating patients with chronic liver disease in whom the diagnosis of chronic active autoimmune hepatitis is suspected

Reflex Tests

Test Id	Reporting Name	Available Separately	Always Performed
SMAT	Smooth Muscle Ab Titer, S	No	No

Testing Algorithm

If smooth muscle antibody (SMA) screen is positive then the SMA titer will be performed at an additional charge.

Method Name

Indirect Immunofluorescence

NY State Available

Yes

Specimen

Specimen Type

Serum

Specimen Required

Collection Container/Tube:

Preferred: Serum gel

Acceptable: Red top

Specimen Volume: 0.8 mL

Collection Instructions: Centrifuge and aliquot serum into plastic vial

Forms

If not ordering electronically, complete, print, and send 1 of the following forms with the specimen:

[-General Request \(T239\)](#)

[-Gastroenterology and Hepatology Test Request \(T728\)](#)

Specimen Minimum Volume

0.4 mL

Reject Due To

Gross	Reject
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hemolysis	
Gross lipemia	Reject
Gross icterus	OK

Specimen Stability Information

Specimen Type	Temperature	Time	Special Container
Serum	Refrigerated (preferred)	21 days	
	Frozen	21 days	

Clinical & Interpretive

Clinical Information

Autoimmune hepatitis (AIH) is caused by chronic inflammation within the liver, resulting in damage to the hepatocytes.(1) Initially, patients with AIH may be clinically asymptomatic, usually identified only through an incidental finding of abnormal liver function tests. At a more advanced stage, patients may manifest with symptoms such as jaundice, pruritus, or ascites, which are secondary to the more extensive liver damage. As implied by the name, AIH has many characteristics of an autoimmune disease, including female predominance, hypergammaglobulinemia, association with specific *HLA* alleles, responsiveness to immunosuppression, and the presence of autoantibodies. There are several autoantibodies associated with AIH, although the most common are smooth muscle antibodies (SMA). SMA are generally identified by indirect immunofluorescence using a smooth muscle substrate. The antigen specificity of SMA in the context of AIH has been identified as filamentous-actin (F-actin).(2) Because the clinical symptoms of AIH are nonspecific, being found in a variety of liver diseases (drug/alcohol-associated hepatitis, viral hepatitis, primary sclerosing cholangitis, etc), the diagnosis can be challenging. A set of diagnostic criteria for AIH has been published and includes the presence of various autoantibodies, elevated total IgG, evidence of hepatitis on liver histology, and absence of viral markers.(3) The combination of autoantibody serology, specifically SMA and anti-F-actin antibodies with liver histology and thorough clinical evaluation are useful in the evaluation of patients with suspected autoimmune hepatitis.

Reference Values

Negative

Reference values apply to all ages.

Interpretation

Seropositivity for smooth muscle antibodies (SMA) is consistent with a diagnosis of autoimmune hepatitis (AIH).

A negative result for SMA does not exclude a diagnosis of AIH.

Cautions

Serologic tests for autoantibodies, including smooth muscle antibodies (SMA), should not be relied upon exclusively to determine the etiology or prognosis of patients with liver disease.

A positive result for SMA may occur in patients who do not have autoimmune hepatitis. A negative result does not exclude a diagnosis of autoimmune hepatitis.

Clinical Reference

1. Mieli-Vergani G, Vergani D, Czaja AJ, et al: Autoimmune hepatitis. Nat Rev Dis Primers. 2018 Apr 12;4:18017
2. Terziroli Beretta-Piccoli B, Mieli-Vergani G, Vergani D: Serology in autoimmune hepatitis: A clinical-practice approach. Eur J Intern Med. 2018 Feb;48:35-43
3. Hennes EM, Zeniya M, Czaja AJ, et al: Simplified criteria for the diagnosis of autoimmune hepatitis. Hepatology. 2008 Jul;48(1):169-176

Performance**Method Description**

The patient's serum in 1:20 and 1:40 (initial screening) dilutions is added to fresh tissue from mouse stomach/kidney and incubated; fluorescein-conjugated antiglobulin is then added. The slides are read with a fluorescence microscope.(Package insert: Kallestad Mouse Stomach/Kidney. Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc; 01/2018)

PDF Report

No

Day(s) Performed

Monday through Saturday

Report Available

2 to 4 days

Specimen Retention Time

14 days

Performing Laboratory Location

Rochester

Fees & Codes**Fees**

- Authorized users can sign in to [Test Prices](#) for detailed fee information.
- Clients without access to Test Prices can contact [Customer Service](#) 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Prospective clients should contact their account representative. For assistance, contact [Customer Service](#).

Test Classification

This test was developed, and its performance characteristics determined by Mayo Clinic in a manner consistent with CLIA requirements. This test has not been cleared or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

CPT Code Information

86015

LOINC® Information

Test ID	Test Order Name	Order LOINC® Value
SMAS	Smooth Muscle Ab Screen, S	26971-2

Result ID	Test Result Name	Result LOINC® Value
609515	Smooth Muscle Ab Screen, S	26971-2