

Clinical Biochemistry

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To: All Lothian GPs

Date: 30th May 2018

Subject: **Safety notice re: Faecal calprotectin requesting**

Dear colleague,

A recent audit of Lothian faecal calprotectin requests has shown that about one quarter of requests are on patients over the age of 50 years. Please note calprotectin is NOT a test for cancer and its use is currently unproven and therefore not recommended in Lothian for those > 50 years who do not have inflammatory bowel disease. Further guidance on faecal calprotectin is available on the GI section of refhelp at

<http://apps.nhsllothian.scot.nhs.uk/refhelp/Gastrointestinal/FaecalCalprotectin#tabs-4|tabs2>.

The reason for this is the increased risk of bowel cancer in this age group. Faecal calprotectin is not sufficiently sensitive to detect bowel cancer and a normal result may be falsely reassuring in this context. A GI referral should be considered for any patient aged >50 years with a change in bowel habit, especially if this is towards more frequent or looser stools. Please see <http://apps.nhsllothian.scot.nhs.uk/refhelp/Gastrointestinal/AlteredBowelHabit> for appropriate referral criteria.

A reminder pop up box has now been added to all faecal calprotectin requests on ICE/GPOC to reinforce the recommendation that this test should not be used for individuals aged >50 years (except for those with known inflammatory bowel disease).

Best wishes,
Sara Jenks
Consultant in Chemical Pathology/Metabolic Medicine
Primary care laboratory interface group chair