

Lab Focus

October 2004—monthly insert to 'Scope from Fairview Clinical Laboratories

Sound bites. . . .

Hemolyzed Potassium Reporting Fairview-University Medical Center

In response to Emergency and Medicine physician requests all hemolyzed potassiums will be reported. Several physicians indicated that there is less risk to the patient to treat a falsely elevated potassium than not to treat an elevated potassium that is real. Physicians also indicated the importance of reporting these results promptly.

Hemolyzed specimens are reported with the degree of hemolysis and a statement cautioning them the potassium may be falsely elevated. Additionally, laboratory staff will communicate to the patient's provider whether any tests cannot be performed (e.g., enzymes) and determine whether a recollection is necessary.

*John Eckfeldt, MD, PhD
Medical Director*

Irradiation of Plasma and Cryoprecipitate Discontinued at Fairview-University

Effective Oct. 15, the blood bank will discontinue irradiation of non-cellular blood components such as plasma and cryoprecipitate. This policy change was based on:

- 1) There has never been a reported case of transfusion-associated graft-vs-host disease (TA-GVHD) from transfused plasma or cryoprecipitate;
- 2) Plasma and cryoprecipitate components have an insignificant number of WBC;

- 3) FDA and American Association of Blood Banks (AABB) standards only require irradiation of cellular components (RBC, platelets, granulocytes);
- 4) Other Fairview hospitals and most other transplant centers do not irradiate plasma and cryoprecipitate given to BMT patients; and
- 5) Physician representatives from both adult and pediatric BMT programs at Fairview-University have endorsed this policy.

The blood bank irradiates cellular blood components to prevent TA-GVHD. Donor WBC can proliferate in the immunodeficient bone marrow transplant recipient or others with significant immunosuppression, potentially causing GVHD and death within 21 days in as many as 80 percent of patients, depending on their degree of immunosuppression.

Both the Fairview-University Transfusion Committee and Medical Executive Committee approved the new policy to no longer irradiate plasma or cryoprecipitate when a physician writes an order to irradiate "all blood component transfusions" and require approval of a blood bank physician for exceptions.

*Ted Eastlund, MD
Medical Director
Fairview-University Medical Center*

Welcome New Pathology Staff

Timothy P. Singleton, MD, joined the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology as the Director of Hematopathology-Flow Cytometry. Dr Singleton completed his undergraduate, medical school and residency training at the University of Minnesota. He trained in hematopathology at the University of Minnesota and Stanford University and is board-certified in anatomic and clinical pathology with special qualification in hematology.

Dr. Singleton served as a staff hematopathologist at Stanford University, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and at William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan, before joining the Division of Hematopathology at Fairview-University Medical Center. He has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles.

Desiree J. Langel, MD, completed medical school at the University of Nebraska and residency training in anatomic and clinical pathology at the University of Washington. Her subspecialty training included general surgical pathology, gastrointestinal pathology and dermatopathology.

Dr. Langel practiced as a dermatopathologist in the Department of Dermatology at the University of Minnesota and Twin Cities Dermatopathology before joining the Department of Pathology at the University of Minnesota.

