

NSW Laboratory Testing Data
2nd Quarterly Report January 2012 to June 2013

Notifications of positive laboratory results for notifiable conditions provide information about the number of new cases of disease. Data on the level of testing is useful to indicate whether an apparent increase in notification may be due to increased testing.

The NSW Denominator Data Project commenced in January 2012 to collect the total number of tests performed per month (the denominator data) for 10 selected notifiable conditions for which the testing rate might impact the notification rate. Data provided each month from 14 public and private laboratories in NSW is collated to give monthly aggregated data per condition. No demographic information was provided.

The positivity rate for the second quarter 2013 ranged from 0.05% (shigellosis) to 5.6% (Ross River Virus). Overall, the positivity rates were similar for the second quarter in 2013 compared to the same period in 2012 – with the exception of Barmah Forest virus (up to 4.9% from 2.2% in 2012) and Pertussis (down to 1.8% from 3.2% in 2012). Notifications for chlamydia and gonorrhoea were correlated with testing, while incidence of enteric conditions suggests seasonal factors influence notification rates rather than testing patterns.

Table 1: Number and positivity (%) of tests performed for selected notifiable conditions by quarter of test

Condition	Test	Quarter 2 2012		Quarter 2 2013	
		Number of tests	Positivity (%)	Number of tests	Positivity (%)
Chlamydia	C trachomatis nucleic acid test (NAT)	90,668	5.69%	98,031	5.19%
Gonorrhoea	N gonorrhoea NAT, culture	111,095	0.94%	121,316	0.85%
HIV	Serology	96,583	-	105,174	-
Ross River virus infection	Serology	4,873	4.49%	3,586	5.58%
Barmah Forest virus infection	Serology	3,715	2.18%	2,816	4.94%
Pertussis	NAT, serology, culture	43,503	3.16%	27,015	1.82%
Salmonellosis	NAT, culture	49,414	1.15%	44,117	1.90%
Shigellosis			0.05%		0.05%
Cryptosporidiosis	Antigen, microscopy	37,901	0.66%	39,135	0.87%
Giardiasis			1.44%		1.44%