

Stool-specimen testing practices adopted by clinical microbiology laboratories in the Veneto Region, Italy

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In order to correctly analyze data of laboratory diagnoses of infectious gastroenteritis for epidemiological purposes, a survey on analytical methods applied by hospital-based clinical microbiology laboratories has been conducted in the Veneto Region (Italy).

The survey has been carried out in 2005 through a questionnaire collecting data on laboratory protocols and materials used for faecal specimens analysis.

Laboratories from all the Local Health Units and University Hospitals of the Region returned the questionnaire. Almost all the laboratories routinely tested for the main foodborne pathogens: 23/23 for Salmonella, 22/23 for Shigella and 19/23 for Campylobacter jejuni. A great variety of analytical methods was applied for pathogen isolation; among these is worth of notice the inappropriate use of selenite broth for Shigella enrichment. Among noncultural methods, immunoassays were largely adopted.

The survey allowed to appraise stool-specimen testing practices among laboratories of the Veneto Region; overall the compliance with guidelines proposed by the main national and international scientific societies resulted rather good.

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