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Title: An audit of microbiological investigations performed on patients admitted with community acquired pneumonia

J.R. 24070 Wilson jwilson35@nhs.net MD ¹, J.M. 24071 Sloan joannesloan@nhs.net MD ¹, C.L. 24072 Griffin carlygriffin@nhs.net MD ¹, M.E.M. 24073 Wilkie morvenwilkie@nhs.net MD ¹, J.D. 24074 Chalmers jameschalmers1@nhs.net MD ¹ and S. 24076 Schembri sschembri@nhs.net MD ¹. ¹ Respiratory Department, Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, United Kingdom, DD1 9SY .

Body: Introduction The British Thoracic Society (BTS) guidelines suggest that blood and sputum culture be performed in patients with moderately severe community-acquired pneumonia (CAP). Atypical testing and viral PCR are recommended in severe CAP. The aim was to identify whether the appropriate microbiological investigations are being performed on patients with CAP. Method This was a retrospective audit. CAP was defined as a clinical diagnosis of pneumonia in a patient with a new radiographic infiltrate. Microbiology investigations performed in CAP patients were compared against the same data collected in 94 CAP patients in 2008. The 2009 BTS guidelines served as the audit standard. Results 210 patients were included. 55% had blood cultures taken, with bacteraemia confirmed in 15 patients. This compared with 70% having blood cultures in 2008, $p=0.02$. 16% (34) had sputum culture compared with 25% (24) in 2008, $p=0.06$. 11% had legionella antigen analysis compared with 16% in 2008. 10% had atypical serology carried out in 2011 and 22% in 2008. 12% had viral PCR compared to 5% in 2008.

In total, only 2.4% of patients had all of the recommended microbiology investigations (2.1% in 2008). 35.2% had no microbiology testing (21% in 2008, $p=0.02$). Conclusions Recommended microbiology investigations are underutilised in CAP patients. There has been a reduction in microbiological testing in comparison with 2008 figures.