

Pathology: Why the consumer is important

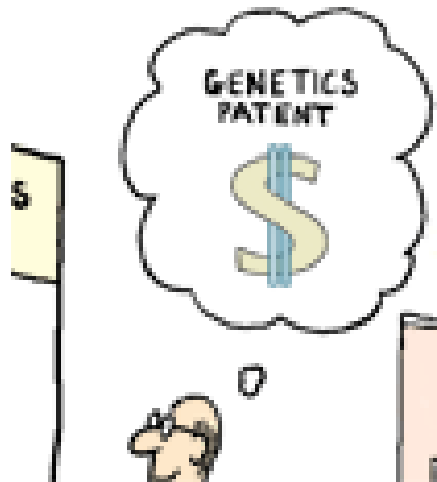
Patients, consumers or clients

Janney Wale, Consumer Representative

Our health care

- As Australians we want and expect
 - quality, accessible health care – largely funded through Medicare (MBS)
 - to trust and respect our healthcare providers
- Pathology plays a critical role in more than 70% of our clinical diagnoses and in many of the decisions around our optimal treatment
 - Pathology tests ordered by our GPs are generally MBS funded

- Read patient....



Have you got the facts straight - ma'am

All that are relevant, and delivered
straight

Just the facts, ma'am...Evidence about Health and Health Care. Canadian
Women's Health Network (2005) www.cewh-cesf.ca/healthreform/index.html

The empowered consumer

- A person who aims to be:
 - Well informed
 - Health literate
 - Participating in informed consent, including financial, and
 - Share responsibility in his or her health care

True or False

- Reported claim that 99% of patients receiving artificial joints did not get the best types'

Comment by AOA Chair of the Registry:

- The National Joint Replacement Registry data indicates that 94% of hip and knee replacements are rated as having excellent or good outcomes for patients

True or False

- 'the most reliable replacement joints cost \$2100'

Comment by AOA Chair of Registry:

- I can only assume this refers to a particular device which is only one component of a hip replacement

August 2009

Effective health care

- Is built on trust, mutual respect, and teamwork (with coordinated care):
 - The information and knowledge for shared decision-making
 - Patient-centered (care appropriate to the patient's individual needs)
- With:
 - Access to safe, evidence-based quality care within an equitable health system

Elizabeth says:

- In January this year, my rheumatologist prescribed a medication that requires monthly blood tests to monitor the response to the treatment and possible effects on my liver. He referred me to XXXX, because he prefers their reporting method and their procedures for patients that require ongoing monitoring.

BEACH Report (2009):

- In the 1990s, National Health Priority Areas were developed to improve health outcomes – Injury, Cancer, Cardiovascular disease, Diabetes, Mental health, Musculoskeletal conditions
- The Practice Incentives Program includes incentive payments to GPs for completing the requirements of an annual diabetes cycle of care
- It is possible that these evidence-based policies may reduce long-term health costs in other areas of the health budget (for example, through avoidable hospital admissions) while increasing pathology expenditure in the short term.

BEACH report on GP ordering

Changes in pathology ordering behaviours of GPs April 2000-March 2002 and April 2006-March 2008, **where:**

- The cost and number of MBS pathology items claimed increased (total cost increased by 62.2%)
- The number of patient encounters where 5 pathology tests or more) were recorded also increased (11.5% to 19% when at least one test ordered)

BEACH data shows:

- Repeats of diagnostic tests are mainly in hospitals
- On Medicare, 60% of patients have one set of pathology tests each year
- 20% of patients have two sets

In Australia, to date:

- National policies aiming to limit growth in pathology expenditure have involved the pathology industry and profession; they have not directly been aimed at the health professionals who order the tests or the consumer...
- The Practice Incentives Program includes incentive payments to GPs for completing the requirements of an annual diabetes cycle of care, which includes (at least) annual testing of HbA1c and lipids, and testing for microalbuminuria, for patients with Type 2 diabetes.
- ...these evidence-based policies may reduce long-term health costs in other areas of the health budget (for example, through avoidable hospital admissions) while increasing pathology expenditure in the short term.

Primary care's the priority for UK

General practice is the key to effective health reform

- says David Colin-Thome, Director of Primary Care for the UK Health Department
- Most cost effective and best care for improved patient health outcomes; reduced hospitalisations for chronic conditions
- Our patients are 'enrolled', voluntarily agreeing to stick with a single GP or clinic

The Weekend Australian Health, November 14-15, 2009

NHS invests in patient information

- Shared patient information between Trusts
- NICE Clinical Practice Guidelines
- Websites

Some of the UK websites:

- NHS Direct www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/
- Clinical knowledge
http://cks.library.nhs.uk/information_for_patients
- www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/
- BMJ Best Health
http://besthealth.bmj.com/btuk/condition_index.jsp
- NHS Evidence www.library.nhs.uk/nologin=true
- NHS (Scotland) www.nhs24.com/content
- Intute
www.intute.ac.uk/healthandlifesciences/medicine
- Consumer Health Information centre www.chic.org.uk/
- Patient Information Forum www.pifonline.org.uk/

More UK websites

- www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/ (the use of evidence in health, healthcare, and medicine)
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk
- www.patient.co.uk about various diseases
- www.healthtalkonline.org (was www.dipex.org) with patient stories
- and www.youthhealthtalk.org
- www.healthdialog.com/hd/Ancillary/UK/ (website of patient stories)
- www.soundshealthy.org (uses radio/pod casts)

Websites in Australia

- Lab Tests Online (www.labtestsonline.org.au) (Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists) - designed for the Australian healthcare consumer. With up-to-date and reliable information about laboratory tests and how they are used
- Radiology procedures (www.insideradiology.com.au) (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists re Quality Use of Diagnostic Imaging)
- HealthInsite (www.healthinsite.gov.au) is an Australian Government initiative, funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. It aims to improve the health of Australians by providing easy access to quality information about human health.
- Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/). Information on the site aims to help improve the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community. The website provides online health and medical information.
- National Prescribing Service (www.nps.org.au/consumers/) for medicines information; about generic medicines, medication review
- ABC Health & Wellbeing (www.abc.net.au/health/)
- www.mydr.com.au/ (has Consumer Medication Information sheets)
- National Health & Medical Research Council (Australia):
www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/categories/general.htm

Elizabeth

- I was given a referral form (for 3-monthly tests) by the doctor and advised to attend the centre that is most convenient to me for the initial test and the regular visits. The form is help at the pathology clinic so all I have to do is turn up with my Medicare card. The clinic is well staffed so there is little waiting time...

Teamwork

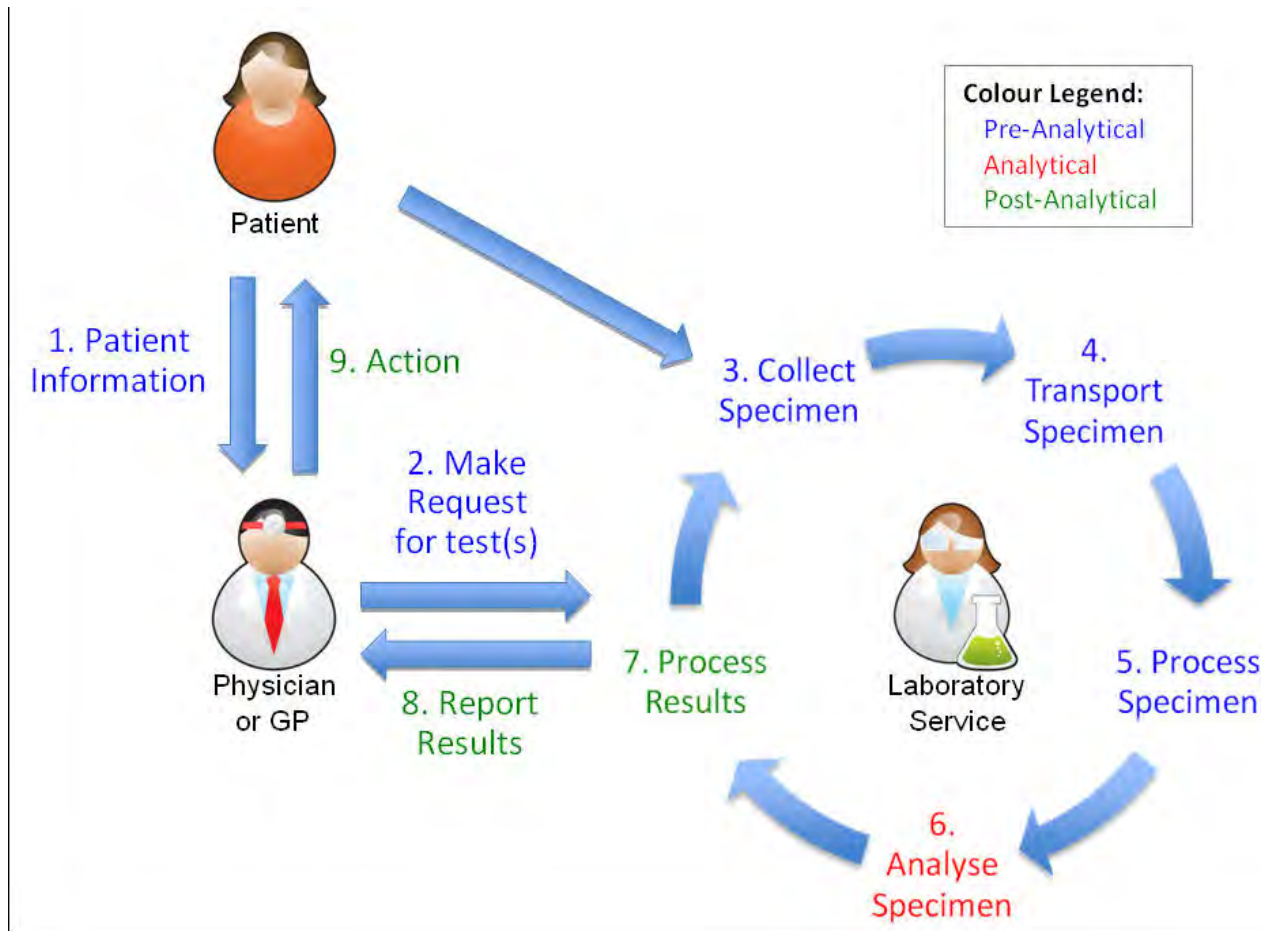
- Providing health care is like building a house. The task requires experts, expensive equipment and materials, and a huge amount of coordination. Imagine that, instead of paying a contractor to pull a team together and keep them on track, you paid an electrician for every power outlet he recommends, a plumber for every tap, and a carpenter for every cupboard.....Getting the country's best electrician on the job (he trained at Harvard, somebody tells you) isn't going to solve the problem.*
- Nor will changing the person who writes the checks
 - And no matter what, money passes from the public to the healthcare industry

***The New Yorker** Annals of Medicine The Cost Conundrum” What a Texas town can teach us about health care

Anne's story

- I have sarcoid, diagnosed about 6 years ago when I had breathing problems. Since then I have had episodic problems
- First a chest infection, then my feet got really sore and went to all sorts of people and tried all sorts of things out – turns out it was the sarcoid
- Recently I have lost a lot of weight and feel really tired all the time – turns out it is the sarcoid affecting my thyroid gland but took a while to find that out

The patient journey:



Pathologists are involved in:

- Diagnosis of a health condition
- Monitoring of disease
- Development of tests
- Quality assurance

We as consumers need to understand that

As consumers:

- Our expectations have increased – treatments available, length of life and quality of life
 - We are busy people and want to organize our work, leisure, and health, and want
 - to plan when we have our babies, with a booked date for a caesarian, IVF if we have left having a baby 'too late' or want a second family; menopause is a nuisance
 - We are possibly increasingly averse to uncertainty eg mastectomies cf lumpectomies

Patients thoughts:

- Blood tests are a very accurate assessment of our health state, even to the 2nd decimal point
(and we do not understand what is meant by the reference range: the 95% CI for normal levels in healthy people)
- I went to a different pathology laboratory and the results look different from usual – how are we to know measurement units or standards used may be different
- Abnormal results: you tell me this is not important - but the result may really be abnormal, which means something is wrong with me.....

Who is helping us?

On pathology testing issues:

- Is there over ordering (re number of tests)?
- How useful is the philosophy of doing all possible tests at once, with one presentation and venopuncture?
- How do we follow best practice – and manage the cost to patient and public?
- When should laboratories be directly in touch with patients?

As of 1st November 2009:

- Co-payments for GP pathology services – the pathology industry reassures us that pensioners and healthcare care holders are still bulk billed
- Collection centres can be setup anywhere
- Request forms for pathology can be taken anywhere
- *We need reassurances on our safety, quality of care or safety nets...*

Point of care testing:

Needs:

- Reassurances of accreditation and quality assurance
- Effective regulation of devices
- Effective management of results and actions as a result of in coordination of care
- Linking with e-Health
- Alternative models of care – delineating who is monitoring a person's medications and care.

The New Yorker article told us

- In a less well off border town in Texas healthcare costs got ‘out of hand’ – with too much of everything: Patients in McAllen “got more of pretty much everything” – more diagnostic testing, more hospital treatment, more surgery, more home care; and more specialists and specialist visits
- In the US, quality of care did not go hand in hand with the costs
 - Elliott Fisher of Dartmouth (2003) (on the treatment received by 1M elderly Americans diagnosed with colon or rectal cancer, hip fracture, or heart attack)
 - Patients in higher-spending regions received 60% more care than elsewhere
 - Yet they did no better than other patients in terms of surviving, ability to function, or satisfaction with the care they received – If anything they did worse as nothing in medicine is without its risks.



Lab Tests Online^{AU}

A public resource on clinical lab testing from the laboratory professionals who do the testing

Peer-reviewed
Non-commercial
Patient-centred

- HOME
- CZ
- DE
- ES
- GR
- HU
- IT
- PL
- UK
- US

Use the search box and menus below to quickly navigate the Lab Tests Online site:

- in the news
- understanding your tests
- inside the lab
- about this site
- site map
- send us your comments
- home

Welcome to Lab Tests Online Australasia

Search Here

This website is specifically designed for the Australian healthcare consumer. When you need up-to-date and reliable information about laboratory tests and how they are used Lab Tests Online Australasia (LTO^{AU}) is the place to look.

The information and material on this website should not be used as a substitute for advice from your healthcare provider. Note also that funding of pathology testing in Australia is complex and not all test costs are covered by Medicare.

This site is based on the extremely popular Lab Tests Online^{US} and Lab Tests Online^{UK} sites but contains information that has been customised for the Australian scene.

A group of pathologists and senior laboratory scientists have worked to ensure that all the information on this site is accurate and helpful.

Tests

- test not listed?
- 5-HIAA
- ACE
- ACTH
- AFP tumour marker

Conditions & Diseases

- Acidosis and alkalosis
- Addison's disease
- Adrenal insufficiency
- Alcoholism
- Allergies

Screening

- Newborns
- Infants
- Children
- Young adults

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Included references

- Just the facts, ma'am...Evidence about Health and Health Care. Canadian Women's Health Network (2005) www.cewh-cesf.ca/healthreform/index.html
- BEACH Report on GP Pathology Ordering: Bayram C & Valenti L (2009). GP pathology ordering. In: Britt H, Miller GC (eds). General practice in Australia: health priorities and policies 1998 to 2008. General practice series no. 24. Cat. no. GEP 24. Canberra: AIHW.
- The Weekend Australian (Nov 14-15 2009) Health: Primary care's the priority
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www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/06/01/090601fa_fact_gawande?printable=true
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- J Doggett (2009) http://cpd.org.au/sites/cpd/files/u2/CPD_OP7_Out-of-Pocket_Jennifer-Doggett.pdf