

NHS Fife

Transforming Liver Function Testing



Colleagues in NHS Fife improved services by transforming the liver function test (LFT) profile by withdrawing gamma-glutamyltransferase (GGT) and total protein. Both tests are still available should they be required through requesting on a case-by-case basis; however they are no longer automatically done as part of the LFT.

GGT is considered the least specific of the LFTs and continually causes GP colleagues problems when they receive a result that is slightly abnormal and “do not know what to do with it”. A few years ago it was removed from the LFT profile in the Acute Hospital. That resulted in a dramatic fall in GGT workload at that time, which has continued. It was therefore hoped that this finding would be repeated with GGT requesting in Primary Care. At the same time it was decided to review the LFT profile further and explore the impact of removing total protein.

Following the introduction of the change in May 2016, GGT requests have fallen by 90% and total protein by 98%. Both tests are still available and workload will be continually monitored.

Projected savings are about £8000 per year

Following on from the success of this exercise this is now standard practice in NHS Fife. It was highlighted that getting the full support of the Medical Directors, together with dialogue with service users was an essential part of the process. The NHS has made cost savings with no change in the availability of tests.