C C Wong, J Antivir Antiretrovir 2014, 6:2
http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/1948-5964.S1.022

OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery

4th World Congress on
Virology

October 06-08, 2014 Hilton San Antonio Airport, TX, USA

Evaluation of the performance of two immunofluorescence test kits for the detection of anti-EBV VCA IGA and anti-EBV ea iga in the screening for nasopharyngeal carinoma

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Nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC) is an epithelial malignancy that is endemic in East Asia and Southeast Asia. In Singapore, it is the 8th most frequent cancer affecting men. Seroepidemiologic studies have demonstrated that patients with NPC have elevated levels of EBV-viral capsid antigen (VCA) and EBV-early antigen (EA) immunoglobulin A (IgA) antibodies, and EBV-IgA serological screening has been introduced to aid the early detection of NPC cases. In this study, we evaluated the performance of two commercially available EBV immunofluorescence slides for EBV-IgA tests, namely, the Focus Diagnostics EBV-VCA IFA and EBV-EA IFA, and the Diagnostic Automation EBV-IFA kits. A total of 161 serum specimens from patients diagnosed with (n=26) and without NPC (n=96) were evaluated. Our findings show an association of NPC with positive EBV-EA results, and indicate it to be a more specific marker for diagnosis of NPC as compared to EBV-VCA. In addition, the Diagnostic Automation EBV-EA kit appears to be a more discriminatory kit compared with the Focus Diagnostics EBV-EA kit.

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