



Department of Health,
P.O. Box 5013,
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25 August 1980.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER No. 195

To Medical Practitioners

LABORATORY DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES BENEFIT

Following recommendations from the Laboratory Services Advisory Committee, and the negotiations of the Laboratory Services Fees Negotiating Committee, Cabinet has recently approved amendments to the Laboratory Diagnostic Services Benefit. These amendments consist of an increase in the Schedule of Fees effective from 1 April 1980 and the inclusion of new and changed tests effective from 1 July 1980. The extra cost in a full year is expected to be \$3.1 million.

The agreement was somewhat complex but in effect means that all scheduled fees claimed after 1 July 1980 will be increased by 7.9 percent.

The increased fees for histology and cytology which became operative from 1 July 1980 are as follows:

			Old Fee	New Fee
			\$	\$
A.14	Bone marrow examination	... ..	4.00	20.00
J.1	Histological examination per case:			
	1. Single specimen (Minor)	... ..	4.00	10.00
	2. Two specimens (Intermediate)	... ..	8.00	20.00
	3. Three or more specimens (Major)	... ..	12.00	30.00
	4. Frozen section (Extra)	... ..	4.00	10.00
J.2	Cytological examination:			
	(a) Cervical smears (per case)	... ..	1.50	4.00
	(b) Other cytological examinations	... ..	3.00	8.00
J.3	Frozen section and/or smear during surgery	... ..	12.00	30.00

Certain new tests have also been included in the Schedule of Fees effective from 19 May 1980. These are as follows:

				Fee
				\$
C.41	Digoxin	... ..	...	5.00
C.42	Anti-epileptic agents	... ..	...	5.00
I.8	Antistreptococcal antibody each antibody (maximum \$6)	... ..	...	2.00
I.15	Rubella antibodies	... ..	...	2.00

Practitioners are requested to keep the cost of laboratory tests firmly in mind when investigating patients. While there is no suggestion that necessary

testing should be eliminated or cut down, it is clear that inappropriate testing or use of unnecessary tests can greatly inflate total expenditure which this year is estimated to be approximately \$22 million.

Professor P. J. Scott's comments in Therapeutic Notes No. 166, dated 20 February 1978, remain particularly pertinent.

SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR LABORATORY DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL SECURITY (LABORATORY DIAGNOSTIC) REGULATIONS 1946

The current cost of tests is arrived at by inflating the Schedule by 7.9 percent.

Code Ref.	Title	Fee \$
<i>Haematology</i>		
A.1	Complete blood count (red and white cells, haemoglobin, PCV, differential leucocyte count, and/or blood film ...	5.00
A.2	Haemoglobin estimation	1.50
A.3	Red cell count or packed cell volume	1.50
A.4	White cell count, differential white cell count, and/or blood film	2.00
A.6	Blood sedimentation rate	1.00
A.7	Platelet count	0.50
A.8	Bleeding time	0.50
A.9	(a) Thrombin clotting time	1.00
A.9	(b) Clot retraction (semi-quantitative)	0.50
A.10	Blood prothrombin test	3.00
A.11	(a) Red cell fragility	2.00
A.11	(b) Red cell autohaemolysis	4.00
A.12	Reticulocytes, siderocytes, Heinz bodies, etc.	0.50
A.13	L.E. cell test	2.00
A.14	Bone marrow examination	20.00*
A.15	Coagulation factor (individual assay)	2.00
A.17	Partial thromboplastin time or kaolin clotting time	2.50
A.18	Red cell or white cell enzymes	2.00
A.19	Measurement of red cell mass	5.00
A.20	Chromosome analysis (for Philadelphia chromosome or similar abnormality)	3.00
<i>Blood Grouping</i>		
B.1	A.B.O. series	0.50
B.2	Rhesus group	0.50
B.3	Coombs test... ..	1.00
B.4	Rhesus titre	2.00
B.5	Rhesus phenotyping	2.00
B.6	Serum screening for antibodies—antenatal	2.00
B.7	Donath Landsteiner test	1.00

*Changed or new tests.

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Code Ref.	Title					Fee \$
General Biochemistry						
C.1	Urea or urea nitrogen	1.00
C.2	Glucose (or other sugar)	1.00
C.3	Chlorides or bromides	...	...	...	...	1.50
C.4	CO ₂ combining power, bicarbonate, or pCO ₂ (one only)	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.5	Bile pigments	...	...	...	...	1.00
C.6	(a) Cholesterol	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.6	(b) Total lipids	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.6	(c) Serum and triglycerides and other lipid fractions (each at)	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.7	Uric acid	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.8	Calcium	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.9	Phosphorus	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.10	Iron and iron binding capacity	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.12	Sodium	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.13	Potassium	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.14	Acid phosphatase	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.15	Alkaline phosphatase...	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.16	Creatinine	...	...	...	...	1.00
C.17	Diastase	...	...	...	...	1.00
C.18	Transaminase:					
	(a) SGOT	...	...	...	...	2.00
	(b) SGPT...	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.19	Similar enzymes	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.20	Total Proteins	...	...	...	...	1.00
C.21	Albumin-globulin ratio or electrophoretic pattern of proteins	...	...	...	...	2.00*
C.22	Haemoglobin pigments:					
	(a) Qualitative (including Hams' acid serum test, Schumm's test)	...	...	...	...	1.00
	(b) Quantitative (including chemical methods of estimating abnormal haemoglobins and haptoglobins)	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.23	Protein bound iodine or T4 or thyroxine	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.24	Magnesium	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.25	Serum vitamin B12	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.26	Serum folic acid	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.27	(a) Fibrinogen (semi-quantitative)	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.27	(b) Fibrinogen screening	...	...	...	...	1.00
C.28	T ₃ I ¹³¹ , red cell or resin uptake, or equivalent	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.29	(a) Immunoglobulins (quantitative) per fraction	...	...	...	...	1.50
	Maximum	...	...	...	...	4.50
C.29	(b) Immunoelectrophoresis, per patient	2.00
C.30	Blood pH	2.00
C.31	Blood ammonia	3.00

*Changed or new tests.

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Code Ref.	Title					Fee \$
C.32	Serum carotene	2.00
C.33	Cryoglobulins (semi-quantitative)	2.00
C.34	pO ₂...	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.35	Lithium	...	...	...	...	2.00
C.36	Serum barbiturate	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.37	Serum pyruvate	...	...	...	...	2.50
C.38	Blood alcohol for diagnostic purposes	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.39	Blood porphyrins (quantitative)	...	...	...	...	4.00
C.41	Digoxin	...	...	...	...	5.00*
C.42	Anti-epileptic agents	...	...	...	...	5.00*
<i>Urine Biochemistry</i>						
D.1	Urine 17—ketosteroids	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.2	Urine adrenocortical steroids	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.3	Bence-Jones protein in urine	...	...	...	...	1.00
D.4	Urine porphyrins (quantitative)	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.5	Urine porphobilinogen	...	...	...	...	1.00
D.6	(a) Catecholamines (qualitative)	...	...	...	...	1.00
D.6	(b) Catecholamines (quantitative)	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.7	Vanilmandelic acid	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.8	Chorionic gonadotrophin (including pregnancy tests)	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.9	Urinary amino acid chromatography	...	...	...	...	2.00
D.10	Hydroxy indolacetic acid	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.11	Oestriol	...	...	...	...	4.00
D.12	Urinary calculus analysis	...	...	...	...	2.00
<i>Faeces Biochemistry</i>						
F.1	Faeces fat:					
	(a) Qualitative	...	...	...	...	0.50
	(b) Quantitative	...	...	...	...	4.00
F.2	Faeces occult blood	...	...	...	...	0.50
F.3	Faeces porphyrins (quantitative)	...	...	...	...	4.00
F.4	Faeces trypsin (quantitative)	...	...	...	...	1.50
<i>Biochemical Function Tests</i>						
G.1	Urine concentration and dilution tests	...	...	...	...	1.00
G.3	Creatinine clearance test	...	...	...	...	2.00
G.4	Gastric analysis: augmented histamine test or equivalent	...	...	...	...	4.00
G.5	Gastric analysis: quinine excretion or similar test	...	...	...	...	2.00
G.7	Bromsulphthalein retention	...	...	...	...	4.00
G.11	Xylose absorption test	...	...	...	...	4.00
<i>Bacteriology: Direct Examinations and Cultures</i>						
H.1	(a) Direct microscopic examination with or without stain (including leucocyte counts in biological fluids)	...	...	...	...	1.00
H.1	(b) Direct microscopic examination with dark ground illumination	2.00

*Changed or new tests.

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Code Ref.	Title	Fee \$
H.1	(c) Direct microscopic examination after digestion or concentration	2.00
H.2	Routine <i>primary</i> culture per specimen	2.00
H.3	Special <i>additional</i> cultural procedures (gonococci, diphtheria organisms, anaerobes, etc.)	1.50
H.4	Colony counts by dilution techniques	2.00
H.5	(a) T.B. culture	4.00
H.5	(b) Blood culture	6.00
H.6	Identification of bacterial species from routine culture by:	
	(a) Enzyme or biochemical test:	
	Each test	0.50
	Maximum	2.00
	(b) Serological identification:	
	Each culture—slide method	0.50
	Each culture—tube method	1.00
H.7	(a) Qualitative chemotherapeutic sensitivity test:	
	Each agent	0.50
	Maximum per organism... ..	1.50
H.7	(b) Quantitative (tube or plate dilution) chemotherapeutic sensitivity test:	
	Each agent	1.00
	Maximum per organism... ..	3.00
H.7	(c) Special chemotherapeutic tests, e.g., serum assays; patients serum v. own organism; antibiotic combinations	4.00
H.7	(d) Anti-bacterial substances in urine	0.50
H.8	Toxin tests	4.00
H.9	Seminal fluid fertility check	2.00
H.10	Animal inoculation	4.00

Bacteriology: Serology and Skin Sensitivity Tests

I.1	Mantoux tests:	
	Single test	1.50
	Multiple tests over three, each	0.50
I.2	Skin sensitivity tests	2.00
I.3	Casoni test	2.00
I.4	Heterophil antibody (Paul-Bunnell):	
	(a) Screening (slide)	0.50
	(b) Presumptive	1.00
	(c) Presumptive and confirmatory	3.00
I.5	Tests for syphilis and gonorrhoea:	
	(a) Fluorescent treponemal test	3.00
	(b) Complement fixation test	1.00
	(c) Flocculation or precipitation test	0.50

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Code Ref.	Title	Fee \$
I.6	Tests for hydatids:	
	(a) Hydatid haemagglutination test	2.00
	(b) Hydatid latex test	1.00
	(c) Hydatid complement fixation test	1.00
I.7	Serological tests for auto-immune diseases:	
	(a) Screen test	1.00
	(b) Titre	2.00
	(c) Immunofluorescent antigen antibody detection (each)	3.00
I.8	Antistreptococcal antibody, each antibody (maximum \$6) ...	2.00*
I.9	C-reactive protein test	0.50
I.10	(a) Agglutination against organisms such as typhoid group or brucella group:	
	Single organism	1.00
	Maximum	2.00
I.10	(b) Brucella complement fixation test	1.00
I.11	Leptospira agglutination	4.00
I.12	(a) Toxoplasma dye or haemagglutination test	2.00
I.12	(b) Toxoplasma complement fixation test	1.00
I.12	(c) Toxoplasma latex test	1.00
I.13	Other complement fixation tests (psittacosis, etc.)	1.00
I.14	Hepatitis associated antigen	1.00
I.15	Rubella Antibodies	2.00*

Morbid Histology and Cytology

J.1	Histological examination per case:	
	1. Single specimen (minor)	10.00*
	2. Two specimens (intermediate)	20.00*
	3. Three or more specimens (major)	30.00*
	4. Frozen section (extra)	10.00*
J.2	Cytological examination:	
	(a) Cervical smears (per case)	4.00*
	(b) Other cytological examinations	8.00*
J.3	Frozen section and/or smear during surgery	30.00*

Group Tests

K.1	Liver function tests:	
	(a) Bilirubin	0.80
	(b) Alkaline phosphatase	1.60
	(c) SGOT	1.60
	(d) SGPT... ..	1.60
	(e) Protein + electrophoresis	2.40

*Changed or new tests.

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Code Ref.	Title	Fee \$
K.2	Myocardial enzymes:	
	(a) SGOT	1.60
	(b) LDH	1.60
	(c) CPK	1.60
K.3	Electrolytes:	
	(a) Sodium	1.60
	(b) Potassium	1.60
	(c) Chlorides	1.20
K.4	Lipid tests:	
	(a) Cholesterol	1.60
	(b) Triglycerides	1.60
K.5	Thyroid function tests:	
	(a) Protein bound iodine or equivalent	3.20
	(b) T ₃ resin uptake	1.60
K.6	Antenatal group:	
	(a) Hb	1.20
	(b) PCV	1.20
	(c) Blood film	1.60
K.6	(d) Antibodies	1.60
	(e) ABO	0.40
	(f) Rh blood group	0.40
	(g) WR or other screening test for syphilis	0.80
K.7	Neonatal group:	
	(a) Hb	1.20
	(b) PCV	1.20
	(c) Blood film	1.60
	(d) Coombs	0.80
	(e) Bilirubin	0.80
	(f) ABO	0.40
	(g) Rh blood group	0.40
K.8	Coagulation screen:	
	(a) Complete blood count	4.00
	(b) Platelets	0.40
	(c) Prothrombin estimation	2.40
	(d) PTTK... ..	2.00
	(e) Bleeding time and thrombin clotting time	1.20

*Changed or new tests.



(J. S. Phillips)

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