



International laboratory comparison of influenza microneutralization assays for A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2), and A(H5N1) influenza viruses by CONSISE

This is the peer reviewed version of the following article:

Original:

Laurie, K.L., Engelhardt, O.G., Wood, J., Heath, A., Katz, J.M., Peiris, M., et al. (2015). International laboratory comparison of influenza microneutralization assays for A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2), and A(H5N1) influenza viruses by CONSISE. CLINICAL AND VACCINE IMMUNOLOGY, 22(8), 957-964 [10.1128/CVI.00278-15].

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/11365/1059332> since 2018-09-22T16:30:51Z

Published:

DOI:10.1128/CVI.00278-15

Terms of use:

Open Access

The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license.

For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

(Article begins on next page)

1 **Submitted as a full-length paper to *Clinical and Vaccine Immunology***
2 **An international laboratory comparison of influenza microneutralisation assay**
3 **protocols for A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) influenza A viruses by CONWISE**

4 Karen L. Laurie^{1#}, Othmar G. Engelhardt², John Wood³, Alan Heath³, Jacqueline M. Katz⁴,
5 Malik Peiris⁵, Katja Hoschler⁶, Olav Hungnes⁷, Wenqing Zhang⁸, Maria D. Van Kerkhove⁹
6 and the CONWISE Laboratory Working Group participants

7
8 ¹WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza, Victorian Infectious
9 Diseases Reference Laboratory, at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity,
10 Melbourne 3000, Australia

11 ²National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, Medicines and Healthcare products
12 Regulatory Agency, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 3QG, United Kingdom

13 ³Formerly National Institute for Biological Standards and Control, Hertfordshire EN6 3QG,
14 United Kingdom

15 ⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta 30329, USA

16 ⁵School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

17 ⁶Public Health England, London, NW9 5HT, United Kingdom

18 ⁷Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo 0403, Norway

19 ⁸World Health Organization, Geneva

20 ⁹Center for Global Health, Institut Pasteur, Paris, France

21 **#Corresponding author :** Karen.Laurie@influenzacentre.org; phone number - +61 3 9342
22 9313; fax number : +61 3 9342 9329

23 **Word Count :** Abstract – 205 words, text - 3494 words

24 **Running Title:** Comparing MN assay methods

25

26 **Abstract – 205 words (250 allowed)**

27 The Microneutralisation assay is commonly used to detect antibodies to influenza virus and
28 multiple protocols are used worldwide. These protocols vary in the incubation time of the
29 assay as well as in the order of specific steps and even within protocols there are often further
30 adjustments in individual laboratories. The impact these protocol variations have on influenza
31 serology data is unclear. Thus a laboratory comparison of the 2-day ELISA and 3-day
32 hemagglutination (HA) microneutralisation (MN) protocols, using A(H1N1)pdm09,
33 A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) viruses, was performed by the CONSISE Laboratory Working
34 Group. Individual laboratories performed both assay protocols, on multiple occasions, using
35 different serum panels. Thirteen laboratories from around the world participated. Within each
36 laboratory, serum sample titres for each assay protocol were compared to determine the
37 sensitivity of each assay and between replicates to assess the reproducibility of each protocol,
38 for each laboratory. There was good correlation between the results obtained using the two
39 assay protocols in most laboratories, indicating these assays may be interchangeable for
40 detecting antibodies to the influenza A viruses included in this study. Importantly,
41 participating laboratories have aligned their methodology to the CONSISE Consensus 2-day
42 ELISA and 3-day HA MN assay protocols to enable better correlation of these assays in the
43 future.

44

45 **Keywords:** influenza; serology; CONSISE; microneutralisation assay; pandemic; A(H5N1);
46 A(H1N1)pdm09; A(H3N2)

47

48 **Introduction**

49 Following infection with influenza viruses, most people develop antibodies specific to
50 the infecting virus that can be measured by serological assays. These antibodies can be
51 detected in the majority of people 2-3 weeks after symptom onset and persist for months (1,
52 3, 7, 13). Thus serology can confirm past infection in the absence of clinical symptoms or
53 virological data, detecting most symptomatic and asymptomatic infections(6).

54 In 2011, an international partnership termed ‘CONSISE’, the Consortium for the
55 Standardization of Influenza Seroepidemiology, was created out of a need identified during
56 the 2009 pandemic, for timely seroepidemiological data to better estimate pandemic virus
57 infection severity and attack rates and to inform policy decisions. CONSISE is comprised of
58 individuals from various organisations, with free membership. The activities of CONSISE are
59 performed by two inter-linked Working Groups, Laboratory and Epidemiology, and a
60 Steering Committee. The focus of the Laboratory Working Group is to improve serological
61 assay comparability and standardisation through consensus assay development, comparative
62 laboratory testing and quality assurance (12)([www. https://consize.tghn.org](https://consize.tghn.org)).

63 The main serological assays to detect antibodies to influenza virus are the
64 Hemagglutination Inhibition (HI) assay and the Microneutralisation (MN) assay. The HI
65 assay detects antibodies that block the influenza virus hemagglutinin binding to sialic acid-
66 linked residues on red blood cells (RBC), whilst the MN assay detects functional antibodies
67 primarily directed towards the hemagglutinin that prevent infection of cells in tissue culture
68 (reviewed in (5, 17)). There are various forms of the MN assay used in laboratories around
69 the world, such as the 2-day ELISA protocol (8, 17), 3-day hemagglutination (HA) protocol
70 (16) and 7-day HA protocol(4, 9). For the purposes of seroepidemiology, the shorter
71 protocols of 2 and 3 days are preferred. The 2- and 3-day MN assays measure antibodies to
72 hemagglutinin, yet differ in preparation of cell monolayers for infection as well as detection

73 of virus infection. Cells are plated with the virus:serum mixture for the 2 day MN assay,
74 whilst a pre-formed cell monolayer is used for the 3-day MN assay. The 2-day MN assay
75 detects nucleoprotein in infected cells (8), whilst the 3-day assay measures hemagglutinating
76 virus in the culture medium or CPE in the cell monolayer. Although there have been some
77 direct comparisons between serological assays performed by multiple laboratories (9, 10, 14,
78 15), the impact of various MN assay protocols on the determination of serological titres is
79 unknown. Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess the intra-laboratory variability and
80 sensitivity of the 2-day ELISA MN assay and the 3-day HA MN assay for detecting
81 antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus and, as an extension, A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) influenza
82 viruses. The study was performed by the CONSISE Laboratory Working Group members
83 (see Appendix).

84

85 **Methods**

86

87 **Reagents used in study**

88 Laboratories were required to supply their own reagents, virus stocks, MDCK cell lines and
89 appropriate cell culture media for the study. Wildtype or reassortant viruses were used: the
90 A(H1N1)pdm09 strains were antigenically similar to the A/California/7/2009 vaccine strain;
91 the A(H3N2) strains were antigenicity similar to the A/Perth/16/2009 or A/Victoria/361/2011
92 vaccine strains. A representative A(H5N1) virus from a clade that was recognised by the
93 laboratory's serum panel was used. Serum panels contained approximately 10 test samples
94 (sera or plasma), comprising low, medium and high titre antibody levels. Sera were from
95 seroepidemiology studies, vaccine studies and ferret sera (to obtain high titre serum in some
96 laboratories), and were supplied by each participating laboratory.

97

98

99 Development of consensus 2-day ELISA and 3-day MN protocols

100 Parameters and variables for the 2-day ELISA (17) and the 3-day HA (11, 16) MN assays
101 were listed. Laboratories within CONSISE shared their protocols for either, or both, MN
102 assays and listed their preferred variables for each parameter identified. Data were collected
103 anonymously, collated and used to develop the consensus protocols.

104

105 Consensus 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays

106 The 2-day ELISA MN assay was to be performed as described by (8, 17) whilst the 3-day
107 HA MN assay was to be performed as described by (11, 16). Laboratories were required to
108 use the specified parameters listed in the CONSISE consensus protocols (**Tables 1 and 2**).
109 Cell culture conditions, virus and serum panels varied between laboratories. The reciprocal of
110 the highest dilution whereby 50% infection was prevented was recorded as the titre for each
111 serum sample.

112

113 Design of study – laboratory assay comparison

114 Individuals who are members of CONSISE were invited to participate in the experimental
115 laboratory comparative study. Thirteen laboratories agreed and were assigned a code letter
116 from A-M, not representing the order of listing of participants in the Appendix. Eleven
117 laboratories took part in the initial A(H1N1)pdm09 study (Labs A-K), seven in the A(H3N2)
118 study (Labs A, C, D, F, I, K, L) and three in the A(H5N1) study (Labs H, L, M). Overall
119 twelve laboratories provided data that could be included in the analyses (Labs A-L). Each
120 laboratory was required to assay A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) or A(H5N1) antibody levels in
121 their panel of sera on at least three separate occasions using both the CONSISE consensus
122 MN assay protocols: 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA.

5

123

124 Statistical analysis

125 All analyses were based on the titres reported by the participants. To enable comparison of
126 assays for each laboratory, the geometric mean titre (GMT) was calculated across runs and
127 replicates to give a single value for each sample for each MN assay method. To calculate the
128 overall ratios between the assays for each laboratory, the ratio of the 3-day titre (detected by
129 HA or cytopathic effect (CPE)) to the 2-day ELISA MN titre was calculated for each sample.
130 The GMT was then calculated for all samples in the serum panel for each laboratory. For the
131 purpose of calculations, negative titres reported as <10 were substituted by '5', while high
132 titres reported as \geq were assigned the next 2-fold titre, e.g.. ' ≥ 1280 ' was assigned '2560'.
133 Correlations in results between assay methods for the panels of serum samples were
134 calculated using Spearman rank correlations.

135

136 Results

137

138 Development of Consensus protocols for the MN assays

139 We assessed the similarities between methodology used in ten laboratories for the 2-day
140 ELISA and the 3-day HA MN assays. Parameters were highly consistent between
141 laboratories for the 2-day ELISA MN assay method, and closely followed published methods
142 (8, 17). There was less consistency between the 3-day HA MN assay methods, particularly in
143 number of sample replicates performed and determination of the endpoint titre (50 % or
144 100% neutralisation). There was variability in both assays for cell culture conditions (data not
145 shown). To facilitate greater comparability between laboratories, we developed consensus
146 protocols for the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays by discussion and agreement at
147 CONSISE meetings ((2) (**Tables 1** and **2**)). Parameters were classified as either required or

6

148 recommended, based on their importance in the interpretation of the assay titres. Required
149 parameters included serum dilutions and reporting of sample titres, assay incubation times
150 and endpoint calculation methods. Recommended parameters listed appropriate variables for
151 use.

152

153 **Data received**

154 **A(H1N1)pdm09 MN assays:** Ten laboratories returned data for both assays. ELISA was
155 used for detection of all 2-day MN assays. For the 3-day MN assay, 7 laboratories used HA
156 only as the detection method (turkey or guinea pig RBC were used), 2 laboratories used CPE
157 only and 2 laboratories used both HA and CPE detection methods. Both HA and CPE
158 detection methods were assessed. Three laboratories performed multiple additional detection
159 methods for one or both of the MN assays, but these data have not been included in the
160 analysis. An eleventh laboratory did not perform the 2-day ELISA MN assay and returned
161 data for only the 3-day HA MN assay (laboratory K). This laboratory shared a serum panel
162 with laboratory F which performed both assays. The 3-day HA MN assay titres from
163 laboratory K were compared with the 2-day ELISA MN assay titres from laboratory F.
164 Laboratories G and J performed each assay twice, rather than three times; laboratory I
165 performed the 3-day MN assays twice.

166

167 **A(H3N2) MN assays:** Data were received from seven laboratories. All laboratories used
168 ELISA for detection of the 2-day MN assay and HA (turkey or guinea pig RBC) for detection
169 of the 3-day HA MN assay and two laboratories also sent corresponding titres detected by
170 CPE. Laboratory K only performed the 3-day HA MN assay and shared a serum panel with
171 laboratory F.

172

173 **A(H5N1) MN assays:** Data were received from three laboratories. The results from
174 laboratory M were negative for all of the serum samples for all tests. No further analysis was
175 possible for this laboratory. Laboratories H and L used horse or goose RBC to read out the 3-
176 day HA MN assay.

177

178 **Reproducibility within laboratories: comparison of replicate tests**

179 Laboratories performed an internal comparison of assay protocols using their own serum
180 panels. The titres within each laboratory for each sample across replicate tests were
181 compared. Detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus, there was good reproducibility of
182 the 2-day ELISA MN assays for the majority of the laboratories, with over 80% of the
183 laboratories with replicate tests differing by ≤ 2 -fold, whilst laboratories B and D had 10-30%
184 of replicate titres differing by > 2 -fold (**Figure 1A**). No laboratories had replicate tests
185 differing by > 4 -fold (**Figure 1B**). For the 3 day MN assays, the variability differed depending
186 on the assay detection method. When detecting by HA, 4 laboratories had replicates differing
187 by > 4 -fold, yet this was only for very few samples (one sample out of 10-12 samples, 8.3-10
188 %), whilst when detecting by CPE, two laboratories had replicate tests differing by > 4 -fold
189 (two samples of 10 (20 %) and 7/12 samples (58 %)) (**Figure 1B**). Six laboratories had
190 replicates differing by > 2 -fold by HA detection (7.5-40 %), whilst three laboratories had tests
191 differing by > 2 -fold when detected by CPE (10-91.7 %) (**Figure 1A**). Laboratory A showed
192 high variability between replicates when detecting the 3-day MN titres by CPE (91.7 %) as
193 two replicate assays were comparable, whilst the third assay was inconsistent (data not
194 shown). In seven laboratories (C, D, E, F, G, J, K), there were no replicates that differed by
195 more than 2-fold.

196 For studies detecting antibodies to A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) viruses, reproducibility was
197 also good, with three instances of replicates that differed by greater than 4-fold, though this

198 was for a small number of samples for each laboratory (10-20%). All other laboratories had
199 replicates that differed by ≤ 4 -fold (**Figure 1C and D**).

200

201 **Relationship between 2-day ELISA MN assay and 3-day HA and CPE MN assays for**
202 **test serum panels**

203 Titres for individual test serum panels were compared for each laboratory between the two
204 assays. Comparing the titres obtained using the 2-day ELISA and the 3-day HA MN assays
205 for studies detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus (**Figure 2A**), seven of the nine
206 laboratories had individual correlation co-efficients that were above 0.9 (good) and two of the
207 nine laboratories did not (**Table 3**). Two laboratories (G and H) had low correlation between
208 the assays (0.580 and 0.638, respectively), as the 3-day MN HA assay gave narrow response
209 ranges compared to the 2-day ELISA MN assay. Comparison of titres between the 2-day
210 ELISA MN assay and the 3-day MN assay detected by CPE showed higher overall
211 consistency between the assays (**Figure 2B, Table 3**).

212 The equivalent correlations were determined for comparison of assays detecting
213 antibodies to A(H3N2) (**Figures 2C, D**) and A(H5N1) (**Figures 2E, F**). For assays detecting
214 antibodies to A(H3N2) virus, the majority of laboratories obtained good correlation between
215 the 3-day HA and the 2-day ELISA MN assays (range 0.865-0.966 (**Table 3**)). Laboratory L
216 had a poor correlation with co-efficient of 0.439 as both of the assays gave a narrow titre
217 range across the serum panel (<10-160). There were only two laboratories that had data
218 detecting antibodies to A(H5N1) virus and they both showed reasonable correlation between
219 the assays (**Table 3**). Laboratory L had much better correlation with the assays detecting
220 antibodies to A(H5N1) virus than A(H3N2) virus.

221

222

223 **Overall relationship between assays for each laboratory**

224 The ratio between titres for the 2-day ELISA and 3-day MN assays for the serum panels was
225 calculated to assess whether a consistent relationship between the performances of assays
226 could be observed for each laboratory (**Table 4**). Many of the ratios indicated average titres
227 within a 2-fold range between methods (i.e. ratios between 0.5 and 2.0), representing
228 reasonable agreement in assay sensitivity. For assays detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09,
229 laboratories F and G had lower 3-day HA MN titres compared to their 2-day ELISA MN
230 titres. For laboratory G, the 3-day HA MN assay gave negative or low titres for all serum
231 panel samples. Laboratories I and K had much higher 3-day MN titres compared to the 2-day
232 ELISA MN assay. The ratios between assays were different for the laboratories that also
233 participated in the comparison studies detecting antibodies to A(H3N2) or A(H5N1). For the
234 comparison assays detecting A(H3N2) antibodies, laboratories D and K also had much higher
235 3-day MN titres compared to the 2-day ELISA MN assay. For comparison assays detecting
236 A(H5N1) antibodies, laboratory H had much higher 3-day HA MN assay titres compared to
237 the 2-day ELISA MN assay titres (**Table 4**).

238

239 **Analysis for bias within the study**

240 Potential factors for bias were assessed. Although each laboratory had a preferred MN assay
241 (2 day ELISA, 3 day HA or 3 day CPE, indicated in **Table 3**), overall this did not seem to
242 affect the correlation between assays. However, for laboratories where the titres from the two
243 assays did not correlate well (A(H1N1)pdm09 virus for laboratories G, H; A(H3N2) virus for
244 laboratory L, **Table 3**) the 3-day MN assay showed less variation in titres (i.e. had less
245 discriminating power) (Figure **2A** and **C**, respectively). Yet there was also variability in
246 correlation for different viruses within the same laboratory (**Table 3**), indicating this effect
247 may be virus specific or due to experience, as the studies were performed consecutively

248 (A(H1N1)pdm09, then A(H3N2)/A(H5N1)). However, for laboratories with markedly
249 different overall titres between assays (laboratories F, H, I and K, **Table 4**) there was no
250 relationship between the preferred assay and the titre achieved. Most laboratories used sera
251 from adults (10 of 11) and wildtype influenza viruses (8 of 11); neither showed any effect on
252 assay comparability. The ratio of HA/TCID₅₀ for the virus stock from each laboratory was
253 assessed and there was no clear relationship, suggesting there was no bias due to the presence
254 of interfering virus particles (HA titres range - 16-1280, median - 128; log₁₀ TCID₅₀/ml range
255 - 4.5-7, median - 6). Overall, there was no clear indication of major bias in the study.

256

257 **Discussion**

258 Upon emergence of a novel influenza virus, seroepidemiological data are critical in
259 understanding the spread and attack rate of the virus to form the base of pandemic risk and
260 severity assessments. Serology also can identify groups susceptible to a novel influenza virus
261 in a population. Understanding the impact of different MN assay protocols would strengthen
262 these estimates for policy decisions. Our comparison of MN assay methodology indicates that
263 there is good correlation between the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays for detection of
264 antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus, in most laboratories. These findings were confirmed in
265 an extension to this study with A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) viruses. Overall, there is potential for
266 either assay to be used. Importantly, through participating in this study, laboratories have
267 aligned their methodology to the CONSISE consensus assays described, harmonising
268 protocols for the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays internationally.

269 Our intra-laboratory assessment demonstrated the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN
270 assays were largely reproducible and comparable. The 2-day MN assay is read out by ELISA
271 using spectrophotometry, which is objective, whilst the 3-day MN assay that is read out by
272 HA and CPE requires more experience and training. In addition, as our study required

273 participating laboratories to perform the assays on three separate occasions, different
274 preparations of RBC for the replicate 3-day HA MN assays were likely. As a two-fold range
275 between titres for the same sample is considered acceptable for serological studies, the assays
276 were overall highly reproducible on different days, with all laboratories having >97% of
277 samples with titres within a four-fold difference for the 2-day ELISA, 92% for the 3-day HA
278 and 92% for the 3-day CPE MN assays.

279 Importantly, in over half of the laboratories, there was very good correlation between
280 the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays when a panel of sera was tested. This suggests
281 there is no inherent difference between the different assays, despite their different readouts.
282 Thus there is no underlying scientific reason that the different MN assay formats cannot be
283 compared when detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09, A(H3N2) or A(H5N1) viruses.

284 However, three laboratories did have poor correlation between the assays which may be
285 related to experience in, and performance of, one particular method. Seven laboratories were
286 experienced in the 2-day ELISA MN assay, whilst 6 laboratories were experienced in the 3-
287 day HA MN assay before commencing this study. Poor correlation between assays was more
288 likely in those laboratories inexperienced with the 3-day HA MN assay, indicating that
289 training in HA or CPE readout might be required. From the MN assay comparison performed
290 here, we anticipate that as laboratories gain experience in both assays, the correlation
291 between the titres obtained for the 2-day ELISA and 3-day HA MN assays will improve. A
292 mentoring system will be established in subsequent international comparison studies
293 performed by CONSISE whereby laboratories who are learning an assay will be assisted by
294 local ‘experienced’ laboratories. We anticipate that this collaborative assay development will
295 encourage rapid and more comparable data between assays and laboratories in the future.

296

297 It is notable that although we were able to standardise many assay-specific variables in
298 this study, such as virus concentration, incubation times, serum dilution and end-point
299 determination, some factors are impossible to standardise. Cell culture conditions are
300 laboratory-specific and may differ by cell line, media supplements and incubation
301 temperatures. Cell culture conditions are often optimised for the variety of viruses and
302 experiments performed in a laboratory as well as the availability of reagents, thus cannot be
303 prescriptive.

304

305 A limitation of the present study is that test serum panels were not shared with each
306 laboratory. As our study compared assay protocols, rather than the performance of different
307 laboratories, this is acceptable. Thus the impact of using consensus assay protocols on inter-
308 laboratory variability could not be examined thoroughly. In a future study being planned by
309 the CONSISE Laboratory Working Group, shared serum panels will be tested for antibodies
310 to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus using consensus 2 day ELISA and 3-day MN Assays and a
311 consensus HI Assay in comparison with use of local assay protocols.

312

313

314

315 **Appendix**

316 **Study Participants:** Jaccqueline Katz, Xiuhua Lu, Min Levine, Vic Veguilla, Feng Liu,
317 Yaohui Bai from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States of America;
318 Pilaipan Puthavathana, Hatairat Lerdsamran, Phisanu Pooruk, Knnika Nateerom from
319 Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University,
320 Thailand;
321 Maria Rita Castrucci, Isabella Donatelli, Marzia Facchini from Istituto Superiore di Sanita,
322 Italy;
323 Noriko Kishida, Masato Tashiro, Takato Odagiri from National Institute of Infectious
324 Diseases, Japan;
325 Shailesh D. Pawar, Sadhana S. Kode from National Institute of Virology, Pune India;
326 Anthony Hawksworth, Ryan Ortiguerra, Gary Brice from Naval Health Research Center,
327 United States of America;
328 Nicholas Martin, Tad Kochel, Jose Sanchez, Michael Cooper, James Cummings from Naval
329 Medical Research Center, United States of America;
330 Katja Hoschler from Public Health England, United Kingdom;
331 Ralf Wagner, Constanze Goepfert, Nina Alex, Joanna Hammann, Britta Neumann from Paul-
332 Ehrlich-Institut, Germany;
333 Malik Peiris, Mahendra Perera from School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong,
334 Hong Kong;
335 Emanuele Montomoli, Guilia Lapini, Sara Sbragi from University of Sienna, Italy;
336 Tian Bai, Zaijiang Yu, Jianfang Zhou from WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and
337 Research on Influenza, Chinese National Influenza Center, China;
338 Louise Carolan, Karen Laurie from WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research
339 on Influenza, Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory, Australia

340

341 **Acknowledgements**

342 The Melbourne WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza is
343 supported by the Australian Government Department of Health to KLL ; an Area of
344 Excellence Scheme of the University Grants Committee of Hong Kong (AoE/M-12/96) to
345 MP at the University of Hong Kong; the UK Medical Research Council and the Bill and
346 Melinda Gates Foundation to MDVK; United States Armed Forces Health Surveillance
347 Center's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System for the Naval
348 Medical Research Center and the Naval Health Research Center; the Italian Ministry of
349 Health (Virological surveillance of epidemic and pandemic influenza) for the Istituto
350 Superiore di Sanita.

351

352 **Conflict of interest** – KLL, JW, AH, MP, KH, OH, WZ, MVK declare no conflicts of
353 interest. OGE reports grants from IFPMA (International Federation of Pharmaceutical
354 Manufacturers & Associations), outside the submitted work. JK reports grants from Juvaris
355 Bio-Therapeutics, Inc. and Glaxo SmithKline, outside the submitted work; JK has the
356 following patents: Preparation and use of recombinant influenza A virus M2 construct
357 vaccine, Materials and methods for respiratory disease control in canines and An effective
358 vaccine against pandemic strains of influenza viruses issued.

359

360

361

362

363 **Figure Legends**

364

365 **Figure 1.** Reproducibility within laboratories of serology assay results for assays detecting
366 antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 (**A, B**) and A(H3N2) and A(H5N1) (**C, D**) viruses. Graphs
367 show the proportion (%) of replicate assays differing by >2-fold (**A, C**) and >4-fold (**B, D**)
368 for 2 day ELISA MN Assay (black bar), 3 day MN Assay detected by HA (white bar) and
369 CPE (striped bar) for each participating laboratory for all sera. ND indicates where the assay
370 or detection method was not performed.

371

372 **Figure 2.** Relationship between test sample titres for antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 (**A, B**),
373 A(H3N2) (**C, D**) or A(H5N1) (**E, F**) viruses determined by 2-day ELISA MN Assay and 3
374 day MN Assay detected by HA (**A, C, E**) or CPE (**B, D, F**). Each laboratory is represented by
375 a colour.

376

377

378

379 **References**

- 380 1. **Chen M I, Barr I G, Koh G C H, Lee V J, Lee C P S, Shaw R, Lin C, Yap J,**
381 **Cook A R, Tan B H, Loh J P, Barkham T, Chow V T K, Lin R T P, and Leo Y S.**
382 2010. Serological response in RT-PCR confirmed H1N1-2009 influenza A by
383 hemagglutination inhibition and virus neutralization assays: an observational study.
384 PLoS One 5:e12474.
- 385 2. **CONSISE** 2014, posting date. Consensus protocols for laboratory assay of antibody
386 to influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 [Online.]
- 387 3. **Dong L, Bo H, Bai T, Gao R, Dong J, Zhang Y, Guo J, Zou S, Zhou J, Zhu Y,**
388 **Xin L, Li X, Xu C, Wang D, and S. Y.** 2014. A combination of serological assays to
389 detect human antibodies to the avian influenza A H7N9 virus. PLoS One 9:e95612.
- 390 4. **Hehme N, Engelmann H, Kuenzel W, Neumeier E, and S. R.** 2004.
391 Immunogenicity of a monovalent, aluminum-adjuvanted influenza whole virus
392 vaccine for pandemic use. Virus Research 103:163-171.
- 393 5. **Laurie KL, Engelhardt OG, Wood J, and Van Kerkhove M.** 2014. Global
394 seroepidemiology: value and limitations. In J. S. Oxford (ed.). Future Medicine.
- 395 6. **Laurie KL, Huston P, Riley S, Katz JM, Willison DJ, Tam JS, Mounts AW,**
396 **Hoschler K, E. Miller, V. K. A. H, B. E, V. K. M, and N. A.** 2012. Influenza
397 serological studies to inform public health action: best practices to optimise timing,
398 quality and reporting. Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses doi: 10.1111/j.1750-
399 2659.2012.0370a.x Online 30 April 2012.
- 400 7. **Miller E, Hoschler K, Hardelid P, Stanford E, Andrews N, and Zambon M.** 2010.
401 Incidence of 2009 pandemic influenza A H1N1 infection in England: a cross-sectional
402 serological study. Lancet 375:1100-1108.

- 403 8. **Rowe T, Abernathy R.A, Hu-Primmer J, Thompson W.W, Lu X, Lim W,**
404 **Fukuda K, Cox N.J, and K. J. M.** 1999. Detection of Antibody to Avian Influenza
405 A (H5N1) Virus in Human Serum by Using a Combination of Serologic Assays.
406 *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* **37**:937-943.
- 407 9. **Stephenson I, Das R G, Wood J M, and K. J. M.** 2007. Comparison of neutralising
408 antibody assays for detection of antibody to influenza A/H3N2 viruses: an
409 international collaborative study. *Vaccine* **25**:4056-4063.
- 410 10. **Stephenson I, Heath A, Major D, Newman RW, Hoschler K, Junzi W, Katz JM,**
411 **Weir JP, Zambon MC, and W. JM.** 2009. Reproducibility of serologic assays for
412 influenza virus A(H5N1). *Emerging Infectious Diseases* **15**:1250-1259.
- 413 11. **Tannock GA, Paul JA, Herd R, Barry RD, Reid AL, Hensley MJ, Gillett RS, G.**
414 **SM, Lawrance P, H. RL, and Saunders NA.** 1989. Improved colorimetric assay for
415 detecting influenza B virus neutralizing antibody responses to vaccination and
416 infection. *J Clin Microbiol* **27**:524-528.
- 417 12. **Van Kerkhove MD, Broberg E, Engelhardt OG, Wood J, Nicoll A, and C. S.**
418 **Committee.** 2012. The Consortium for the Standardization of Influenza
419 Seroepidemiology (CONSISE): A Global Partnership to Standardize Influenza
420 Seroepidemiology and Develop Influenza Investigation Protocols to Inform Public
421 Health Policy. . *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* **Published online: 2012 Dec**
422 **26. doi: 10.1111/irv.12068. [Epub ahead of print].**
- 423 13. **Veguilla V, Hancock K, Schiffer J, Gargiullo P, Lu X, Aranio D, Branch A, Dong**
424 **L, Holiday C, Liu F, Steward-Clark E, Sun H, Tsang B, Wang D, Whaley M, Bai**
425 **Y, Cronin L, Browning P, Dababneh H, Noland H, Thomas L, Foster L, Quinn C**
426 **P, Soroka S D, and K. J. M.** 2011. Sensitivity and specificity of serologic assays for

- 427 the detection of human infection with 2009 pandemic H1N1 virus in U.S. populations.
428 *Journal of Clinical Microbiology* **49**:2210-2215.
- 429 14. **Wood J M, Gaines-Das R E, Taylor J, and C. P.** 1994. Comparison of influenza
430 serological techniques by international collaborative study. . *Vaccine* **12**:167-174.
- 431 15. **Wood JM, Major D, Heath A, Newman RW, Höschler K, Stephenson I, Clark T,**
432 **Katz JM, and Z. MC.** 2012 Reproducibility of serology assays for pandemic
433 influenza H1N1: collaborative study to evaluate a candidate WHO International
434 Standard. *Vaccine* **30**:210-217.
- 435 16. **World Health Organization, G. I. P.** 2002. WHO Manual on Animal Influenza
436 Diagnosis and Surveillance. **WHO/CDS/CSR/NCS/2002.5 Rev.1.**
- 437 17. **World Health Organization, G. I. S. N.** 2011, posting date. Manual for the
438 laboratory diagnosis and virological surveillance of influenza. [Online.]
- 439
- 440

Table 1. CONISE Consensus 2-day ELISA MN Assay for detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus (based on [1, 2])

| Parameter | Required Parameter | Recommended parameter |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| A. Stock Virus preparation | | |
| Cell substrate for virus growth | | Day 10 embryonated eggs |
| Stock virus infectivity and method of determination | | At least 10^6 TCID ₅₀ /ml, read by ELISA |
| Stock storage | | Aliquots of bulk virus preparation |
| B. Sera preparation | | |
| Storage of sera following receipt | | -70 °C, -20 °C, 4 °C, 1-2 freeze thaw cycles in testing laboratory |
| Pre-assay treatment of sera | | Heat treatment 56 °C for 30 min, undiluted in media |
| Initial sera dilution | 1:10 | - |
| Sample type | | Sera only or plasma only |
| C. Virus preparation | | |
| Final virus concentration per well | 100TCID ₅₀ | - |
| Volume of virus solution added per sample | 50 µl | - |
| Virus/serum mix incubation | | 1h at 37 °C |
| Calculated starting sera dilution | 1:10 excluding cell culture | - |

| | volume | |
|--|--------------------|--|
| D. Cell preparation | | |
| Preparation of cells | | Cell suspension |
| Cell type used | | MDCK ('Salisbury'), MDCK-SIAT1 |
| Assay diluent/culture media | | Coon's/Dulbecco's Modified Eagles with 1% BSA/FCS, laboratory preferred media |
| E. Assay set-up | | |
| Incubation time of assay to endpoint reading | 18 -22h | |
| Incubation conditions | | 35-37 °C, 5% CO ₂ |
| # of sample replicates | | Replicates preferred if available |
| F. Endpoint estimation | | |
| Endpoint determination | | Viral antigen detection by ELISA using anti-nucleoprotein antibody (clone) |
| Endpoint calculation method | 50% neutralisation | |

Table 2. CONSIDE Consensus 3-day HA MN Assay for detecting antibodies to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus

| Parameter | Required Parameter | Recommended parameter |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| A. Stock Virus preparation | | |
| Cell substrate for virus growth | | Day 10 embryonated eggs, MDCK cells, MDCK-SIAT1 cells |
| Stock virus infectivity and method of determination | | At least 10 ⁶ TCID ₅₀ /ml, read by RBC agglutination |
| Stock storage | | Aliquots of bulk virus preparation |
| B. Sera preparation | | |
| Storage of sera following receipt | | -70 °C, -20 °C, 4 °C, 1-2 freeze thaw cycles in testing laboratory |
| Pre-assay treatment of sera | | Heat treatment 56 °C for 30 min, undiluted in media |
| Initial sera dilution | 1:10 | - |
| Sample type | | sera only or plasma only |
| C. Virus preparation | | |
| Final virus concentration per well | 100TCID ₅₀ | |
| Volume of virus solution added per sample/well | | 50 µl, 100 µl, 200µl |
| Virus/serum mix incubation | | 1h at 37 °C |
| Virus/serum mix incubation on cell monolayer | | 1h at 37 °C |
| Calculated starting sera dilution | 1:10 excluding virus | - |

| | volume | |
|--|--------------------|---|
| D. Cell preparation | | |
| Preparation of cells | | preformed monolayer |
| Cell type used | | MDCK (ATCC), MDCK ('Salisbury'), MDCK-SIAT1 |
| Assay diluent | | Coon's/Dulbecco's Modified Eagles, with trypsin (1/2 µg/ml), laboratory preferred media |
| Cell infection media | | Coon's/Dulbecco's Modified Eagles, with trypsin (1/2 µg/ml), laboratory preferred media |
| E. Assay set-up | | |
| Incubation time of assay to endpoint reading | 3 days | |
| Incubation conditions | | 35-37 °C, 5% CO ₂ |
| # of sample replicates | | Replicates preferred if available |
| F. Endpoint estimation | | |
| Endpoint determination | | turkey/guinea pig RBC agglutination, CPE |
| Endpoint calculation method | 50% neutralisation | |

Table 3. Correlation of titres for test samples between assays by laboratory. For each laboratory, Spearman rank correlation coefficients were calculated to compare the 2-day ELISA MN against the 3-day HA or CPE MN assay.

| Laboratory | Correlation of 2-day MN to 3-day MN | | | | | | Preferred assay | |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | A(H1N1)pdm09 | | A(H3N2) | | A(H5N1) | | | |
| | 3-day | 3-day | 3-day | 3-day | 3-day | 3-day | | |
| | HA | CPE | HA | CPE | HA | CPE | | |
| A | 0.966 | 0.901 | 0.865 | | | | 2 day | |
| B | 0.976 | | | | | | 2 day | |
| C | 0.992 | | 0.966 | | | | 3 day | |
| D | | | 0.892 | 0.890 | 0.898 | | | 3 day |
| E | 0.944 | | | | | | 2 day | |
| F | 0.965 | | 0.966 | | | | 3 day | |
| G | 0.580 | | | | | | 2 day | |
| H | 0.638 | 0.738 | | | 0.883 | 0.908 | 2 day | |
| I | 0.970 | | 0.954 | 0.901 | | | 2 day | |
| J | | | 0.944 | | | | 3 day | |
| K ^a | 0.931 | | 0.942 | | | | 3 day | |
| L | | | 0.439 | | 0.833 | | both | |

^aTitres for 2-day ELISA MN from laboratory F, as laboratories F and K shared serum panels.

Table 4. Ratios between 2-day ELISA MN Assay and 3-day MN Assay detected by HA and CPE.

| Laboratory | Average Ratio of 3-day MN titre to 2-day MN titre | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | A(H1N1)pdm09 | | A(H3N2) | | A(H5N1) | |
| | 3-day HA | 3-day CPE | 3-day HA | 3-day CPE | 3-day HA | 3-day CPE |
| A | 2.4 | 1.5 | 1.9 | | | |
| B | 0.9 | | | | | |
| C | 0.8 | | 1.5 | | | |
| D | | 2.0 | 3.7 | 3.8 | | |
| E | 1.0 | | | | | |
| F | 0.3 | | 1.3 | | | |
| G | 0.1 | | | | | |
| H | 1.5 | 1.6 | | | 5.8 | 6.3 |
| I | 5.22 | | 0.88 | 0.87 | | |
| J | | 1.2 | | | | |
| K ^c | 2.4 ^a | | 3.2 | | | |

1

L

1.1

0.4

^aTitres for 2-day ELISA MN from laboratory F, as laboratories F and K shared serum panels.

Figure 1

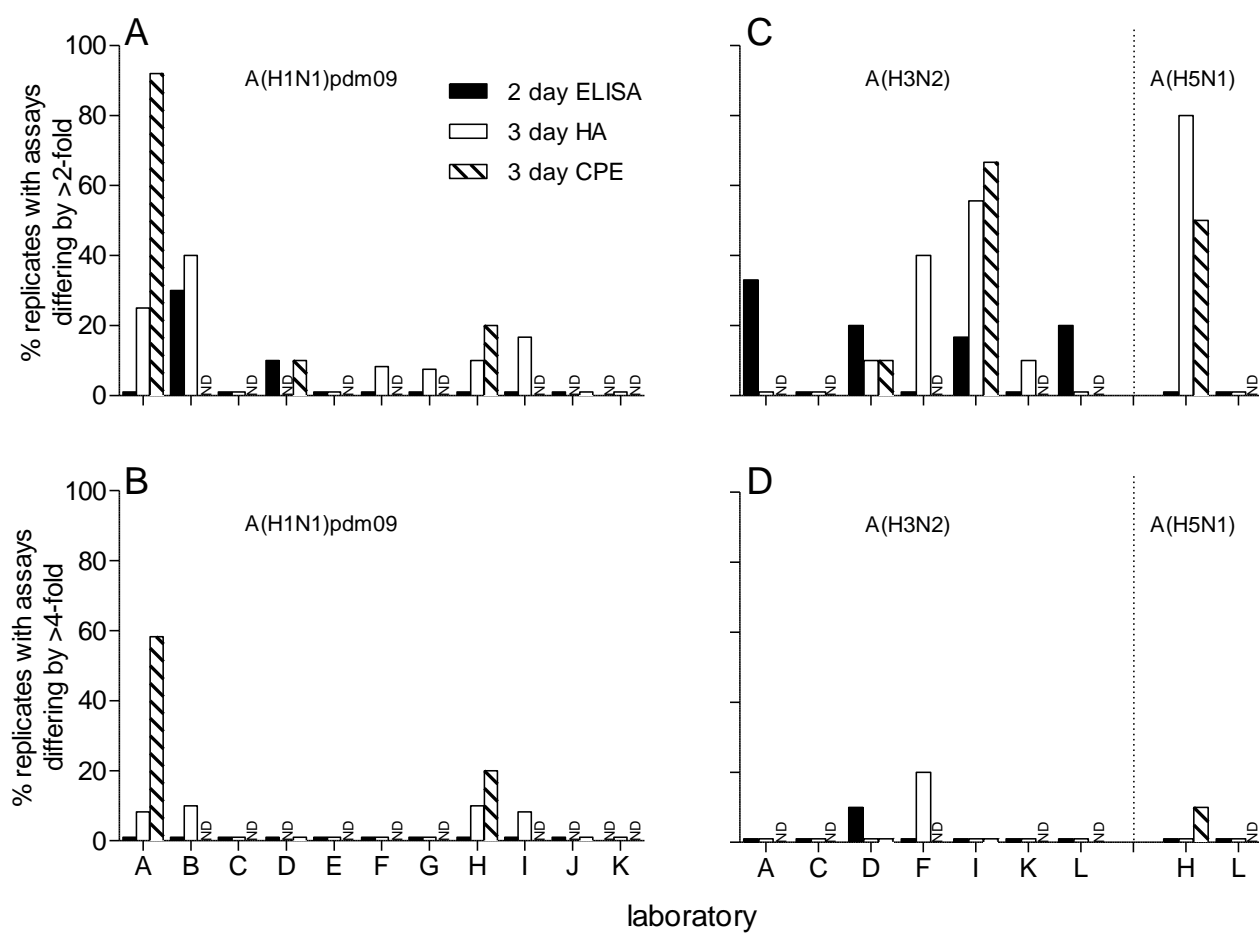


Figure 2

