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Use of Helicobacter pylori antigen stool test in PHC and family medicine setting, eastern Croatia

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Background and Aim: The Helicobacter pylori antigen stool test is a relatively new, noninvasive test for diagnosing Helicobacter pylori (HP) infection, appropriate for screening of patients with dyspepsia and other upper abdominal symptoms, in PHC setting, and for detection of patients in whom eradication therapy was unsuccessful. The aim was to assess the rates and patterns of this test use, in our working surrounding, Osijek-Baranja County, eastern Croatia.

Methods: Retrospective study. Results were analysed on the sensitive (monoclonal) ELISA test for the detection of HP stool antigens, performed in 2014, in the Microbiology Department of the Public Health Institute of Osijek-Baranja County. From the list of patients tested several times, we identified those in whom eradication therapy was unsuccessful.

Results: A total of 3223 patients were tested on HP stool antigens in 2014, with 3516 tests performed. Referred patients were 52,4±14,5 years old, predominantly women (70%). The number of patients tested once (referred by primary physicians for screening on HP infection) was 2909. There were 2317 negative and 314 positive results. The rate of post-treatment testing was 45%. The percent of patients to whom eradication treatment was unsuccessful after the first, but yet successful after the second round of treatment was 37,5%. The percent of patients to whom eradication treatment was unsuccessful even after the second round of treatment was 28%.

Conclusion: Primary physicians in Osijek-Baranja County, eastern Croatia, have taken the sensitive test for the detection of HP stool antigens into their routine practice, primarily for the purpose of screening of patients with upper abdominal symptoms, while post-treatment checks have been insufficiently performed. Results indicating patients resistance to treatment were comparable to those found in other studies.