

Rapid tests for Group A Streptococcal infections in people with a sore throat (provisional title)

Group A Streptococcus (Strep A) is a bacterium which can cause infection in the throat, resulting in inflammation and pain. Acute sore throat is usually self-limiting and will resolve without treatment, but in some cases, the bacterial infection may need to be treated with antibiotics. In current practice, clinical scoring tools such as FeverPAIN and Centor are used to help guide the use of antibiotics in patients presenting with a sore throat. The intended use of rapid Strep A tests is in conjunction with these clinical scoring tools (and clinical evaluation) to guide antibiotic prescribing for people presenting with sore throat. Using the tests may give a quicker and more accurate confirmation of the presence or absence of bacterial infection compared with standard laboratory testing, which could allow quicker treatment decisions to be made. More targeted antibiotic prescribing may also contribute to improved antimicrobial stewardship and consequently, help to reduce antimicrobial resistance. The NICE Diagnostics Assessment Programme will assess the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the rapid tests for Strep A in order to make recommendations on their use in the NHS.