Letters to the Editor should be typed doubled-spaced (including references) with conventional margins. The overall length is limited to five manuscript pages, including not more than one figure or one table.

Oligoclonal Bands Are Found In Electrophoretograms of Serum of Patients with Multiple Sclerosis

To the Editor:

A recent paper (1) describing oligoclonal banding in serum has raised the question as to whether it is necessary to perform a blood-CSF paired test in patients with multiple sclerosis. In a recent study, we found no significant differences in the distribution of oligoclonal bands between patients with multiple sclerosis and normal controls. This suggests that the detection of oligoclonal bands in serum alone may be sufficient to confirm the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

References

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References


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Modifications in a Method for Vanillylmandelic Acid in Urine

To the Editor:

We recommend several modifications to our recently published (1) method for determination of vanillylmandelic acid (VMA) in urine. Although the method usually works well as described, we and others (personal communications, 1985) noticed batch-to-batch variations in the analytical columns, in terms of efficiencies (plate count), retention times, and longevity. Because good efficiency and reproducible selectivity are required for VMA to be resolved from earlier-eluting peaks, we now use a 4.6 cm x 150 mm column of 5-Å Molecular Sieves 100 for the reversed-phase analytical separation.

We use mobile phase consisting of 100–150 mL of methanol and 850–900 mL of phosphate buffer (pH 3.5, 0.1 mol/L) per liter, with 2 mmol of Q3 (Regis Chemical Co. brand of N-triethylammonium phosphate) ion-pair agent per liter. This mobile phase differs from that described previously only in that 100 to 150 mL of methanol is used per liter instead of 400 mL. Retention times for VMA and isovanillylmandelic acid are 4.0 and 5.6 min, respectively, when a 150 mL/L methanol mobile phase is delivered at 1.5 mL/min.

Several commercially available 10-μm C18 reversed-phase packings should be suitable for packing the 5 x 30 mm minicolumns used for the preliminary purification of urine samples. Based on their retention characteris-

Poor Performance of the Baker Nephelometer and Reagents

To the Editor:

We would like to report our experience with and problems in the use of the Baker 420 laser nephelometer and its reagents (Baker Instruments Corp., Allentown, PA 18103) for measurement of specific proteins. This system assays proteins and drugs by monitoring polymer-enhanced antigen–antibody complex formation at antibody excess, by use of kinetic or end-point nephelometry. Our problems surfaced soon after installation of the instrument (serial no. 249) and test runs in April 1984, when most of the manufacturer's antisera to IgG, IgM, IgA, C3, C4, haptoglobin, and α2-macroglobulin exhibited background light scattering 1.6 to 5.0 times above the maximally allowable QC limit of 150 light scattering units. Unacceptably high back-