Combining Serum Carbohydrate-Deficient Transferrin and Hair Ethyl Glucuronide to Provide Optimal Information on Alcohol Use

To the Editor:

Weykamp et al. recently reported on their efforts toward the harmonization of carbohydrate-deficient transferrin (CDT) measurements in serum (1). Alcohol biomarkers play a key role in the identification of alcohol abuse, a chronic disorder with enormous health and legal implications. CDT is a widely used biomarker for the detection of excessive alcohol use that has a high diagnostic sensitivity and specificity and is in comparable to traditional biomarkers. Exam-

sions. Although harmonization efforts may be premature for a test that is not widely used compared with CDT, it could lead to a wider use of hair EtG testing, eventually in combination with CDT measurements.

We agree that harmonization of measurements should take place for a better interpretation of laboratory results in general, but we would like to emphasize that time, finances, and effort should be according to the scientific and clinical utility of the biomarker. We believe that CDT in serum could be combined with hair EtG to provide optimal information, in terms of both alcohol intake over the prior month and the chronicity of the intake in the past few months to years. In this case, we should focus on a metabolite of ethanol as a more accurate biomarker, preferentially one that can also detect the chronicity of the alcohol use.

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References


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