

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **RCPA provides guidance on serum tumour markers**

The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) has announced a new position statement, outlining its recommendations on the requesting, testing and reporting of serum tumour markers, specifically related to the testing of serum specimens (not urine, tissue or cells). The appropriate use of tumour marker testing is complex and the new guidelines have been created to reduce the risk of patient harm which may occur when testing is performed inappropriately. The recommendations do not include markers such as prostate specific antigen or hormones, although the principles described with respect to tumour marker testing and the reporting of results may still apply.

Dr Michael Harrison, President of the RCPA, said that the new statement provides guidance to clinicians who initiate testing and receive reports for serum tumour markers, and also for pathology practices that provide these tests and reports.

“Importantly, every patient must be treated as an individual and therefore the RCPA encourages use of this position statement by those who are requesting and interpreting tumour markers as a starting point in order to determine the best course of action for each patient. In general, the best validated use is for monitoring of a known tumour. Measurement of tumour markers for case finding or diagnosis should only be done by those knowledgeable in the field,” said Dr Harrison.

“Our statement provides guidance across test and laboratory selection, reporting results, interpreting results, and laboratory practices. We have also outlined when tumour marker testing is not recommended such as early post-breast cancer treatment. The selection of tumour marker tests is generally determined by the malignant condition present. The selection of an appropriate tumour marker, however, should not necessarily be restricted according to the primary tissue or organ site involved as the measurement of other markers may be useful for identifying the presence of malignancy,” said Dr Harrison.

“We have provided general principles to our recommendation that tumour marker results must always be interpreted in the context of the clinical setting and the reason for the request. In addition, there is a guideline of laboratory practice, which advises laboratories to review results for unexpected changes and perform confirmatory testing where indicated,” said Dr Harrison.

The RCPA’s new position statement was today released at an International Pathology Day 2016 event in Surry Hills, Sydney attended by members of the College, medical professionals and guest speakers including journalist, Sandra Sully and Greater Western Sydney Giants player, Sam Reid.

For more information, visit our website [www.rcpa.edu.au](http://www.rcpa.edu.au) to see the full position statement. Alternatively, for general pathology updates, visit the RCPA on Twitter - @PathologyRCPA - and [Facebook](#) #MedicinesPathology #RCPA #pathology

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**About the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia:**

The RCPA is the leading organisation representing pathologists in Australasia. Its mission is to train and support pathologists and to improve the use of pathology testing to achieve better healthcare.

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