

## Labstrack – March 2014

# Acid Fast Bacilli (AFB) Smear Reports - Correlation with the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition

To Health Care Providers:

The Public Health Ontario Laboratories (PHOL) AFB smear reporting protocol reflects an internationally accepted semi-quantitative terminology and protocol for enumerating AFB observed in smears. The following chart compares AFB smear results from PHOL enumeration methods to those published in the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards (CTS) – 7<sup>th</sup> Edition:

Number of AFB seen in smear	PHOL Reporting <sup>2</sup>	CTS Reporting
None	No AFB seen	No AFB seen
3-9 / smear	Few <sup>1</sup>	Inconclusive, repeat <sup>1</sup>
1-9 / ten fields	1+	1+ (rare) <sup>3</sup>
1-9 / field	2+	2+ (few)
10-90 / field	3+	3+ (moderate)
> 90 / field	4+	4+ (numerous)

<sup>1</sup>Few as designated by PHOL is reported only after a repeat second smear is read confirming the presence of acid-fast bacilli on the smear. PHOL does not use the “inconclusive, repeat” terminology.

<sup>2</sup>The criteria set in the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards are enumerated by reading smears at 250x magnification. PHOL smears are read at 200x magnification with the same number of fields as in the CTS. Results correlate with the same enumeration as indicated in the chart above.

<sup>3</sup>The PHOL does not use the terminology as described in the CTS (rare, few etc). Please refer to the chart above regarding smear enumeration.

**Reference:** Canadian Tuberculosis Standards – 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Canadian Respiratory Journal Volume 20, Supplement A July/August 2013

## Acid Fast Bacilli Reports (Continued)

### For further information:

- Contact the PHOL Customer Service Centre at 416-235-6556 or 1-877-604-4567 (toll-free), or by email at [CustomerServiceCentre@oahpp.ca](mailto:CustomerServiceCentre@oahpp.ca)
- For PHOL specimen collection information and previous Lababstracts, refer to <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/Labs>
- The current version of the PHOL General Test Requisition and other forms are available at <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/Requisitions>
- To subscribe to future Lababstracts, email [lababstracts@oahpp.ca](mailto:lababstracts@oahpp.ca)
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