Monkeypox in the laboratory

Date: 23 December 2017
Source: Promed

A monkeypox outbreak, involving so far 61 laboratory confirmed cases and one death, is ongoing in Nigeria. Further details can be obtained at the Promed website http://www.promedmail.org/post/5516079.

Comment
The laboratory diagnosis of monkeypox is based mostly on molecular detection methods and few commercial detection kits are available for both antigen and molecular detection (including some prototypes recently developed). We cannot elaborate more about them because we do not have any direct experience on their performance.

Serological tests cannot usually distinguish among other orthopoxvirus infections or anti-viara vaccination. Data on peptide-based ELISA, able to detect monkeypox-specific antibody have been published. Virus isolation may be performed, but it requires adequate biocontainment facilities.

Risk group classification of monkeypox virus is different in the EU countries (please check your national regulations). Diagnostic samples can be shipped as category B according to IATA regulations. In case of suspected imported cases that need laboratory diagnosis, specimens are usually sent to national reference centres. Information about laboratories available to provide diagnostic support may be found at EMERGE and EVD-Labnet websites (www.emerge.rki.eu/, www.evd-labnet.eu/).

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