Public Health England

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Rapid assessment of the (ProLab/Certest) ViaSure SARS-CoV-2 Real Time PCR detection Kit (VS-NCO296T)

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Public Health England
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG
Tel: 020 7654 8000
www.gov.uk/phe
Twitter: @PHE_uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland

Prepared by NIS Laboratories, National Infection Service, Public Health England

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Introduction

The emergence of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in humans and spread of the associated disease, COVID-19, has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO). In the UK, the deployment of a PHE in-house real-time PCR assay in PHE, PHE collaborating laboratories as well as in Devolved Administrations is being followed up with assessments of commercially developed and provided diagnostic tests for SARS-CoV-2 detection.

This assessment examined the ProLab/CerTest Biotech ViaSure SARS-CoV-2 Real Time PCR detection Kit (VS-NCO296T). The assessment was carried out following the instructions for use (IFU) for VS-NCO296T (IU-NCO296Tenes0320 rev.00).

The assessment panel

The assessment sample-panel totalled 195 specimens, including respiratory clinical specimens negative for SARS-CoV-2 as determined by the validated in-house PHE PCR assay and 3 dilutions of material positive for SARS-CoV-2. Statistical assessment of panel sizes determined that when the measured specificity for 195 samples is 100% that the true specificity of the test is at least 98.1%.

Performing and analysing the assay

The NCO296T assay will detect SARS-CoV-2 in respiratory samples. The kit contains lyophilised SARS-CoV-2 Positive Control and a Reaction-Mix tube containing the PCR reaction components in a dehydrated stabilised form, allowing the kit to be shipped at room temperature. The assay utilises a real-time technology targeting the orf1ab gene using the FAM channel, the N gene using the ROX channel and an internal control detected in the HEX or VIC or JOE channel.

Real time PCR was performed upon an Applied Biosystems™ 7500 Fast Real-Time PCR System following the cycling and fluorescence acquisition parameters detailed in the ViaSure SARS-CoV-2 Real Time PCR detection Kit (VS-NCO296T) IFU.

Five microliters of nucleic extracts from clinical samples were used in each real time PCR reaction, with a final volume for 20 µL as per the IFU. Samples were processed in batches of 24 or 90 with appropriate; negative, internal and positive controls.

Results

Results of real time PCR testing were verified as valid if the designated control wells achieved the defined criteria in the ViaSure SARS-CoV-2 Real Time PCR detection Kit (VS-NCO296T) IFU. Samples and controls were assigned a cycle threshold value at which signal was detected above the background fluorescence in any of the FAM, ROX or JOE channels, following the data analysis methodology detailed in the IFU. The samples were then interpreted as either ‘COVID-19 Positive’, ‘COVID-19 Negative’ or ‘Potential positive’ (to retest), or ‘result invalid’ (to retest). Results were considered valid if the Negative and Positive Controls achieved the desired criteria as per the IFU.

Compared with results from the PHE COVID-19 in-house real-time PCR assay, the following was found:

	Samples (n)	**True positive**	**False positive**	**True negative**	**False negative**	**Negative percentage agreement**
Viasure SARS-CoV-2 Real Time PCR detection Kit (VS-NCO296T)	195	0	0	195	0	100% (195/195)

From a challenge with positive material, all samples for a 3-step dilution series were found positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Report date

A version of the report was distributed by PHE’s COVID Incident Virology Cell on 01/04/2020.

Disclaimer

PHE's assessments of commercial products for diagnosing COVID-19 infection have been carried out primarily for PHE's own use and under agreement; the reports of such assessments are shared solely for the readers' information; PHE does not in any way recommend any particular COVID-19 diagnostic assay or extraction platform; PHE shall not be responsible for any choice of COVID-19 diagnostic assay or extraction platform, and it is the testing laboratory's responsibility to ensure that any such assay or platform implemented has undergone the necessary verification and validation; and PHE shall not be liable, to the greatest extent possible under any applicable law, for any claim, loss or damage arising out of or connected with the use of this and related reports and any choice of COVID-19 diagnostic assay products or extraction platforms.

A position statement regarding COVID-19 tests evaluated by PHE is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/position-statement-regarding-covid-19-tests-evaluated-by-phe

Further information

Queries about our assessments of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) diagnostics should be sent to labvalidation.cov@phe.gov.uk

Table of changes

Date	New version no.	Details of changes
27/04/2020	1.2	Changes to disclaimer
27/04/2020	1.2	Consistency for use of the term "assessment"
27/04/2020	1.2	Tables of changes added
12/05/2020	1.2	Change of template
12/05/2020	1.2	Version number and website added (footer)
12/05/2020	1.2	Addition of date reported by Virology Cell
26/05/2020	1.2	Minor changes for consistency with other reports