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Summary

UREA BREATH TESTS IN IRELAND: AN 8 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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Stomach & H. Pylori

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Retrospective analysis of 6684 urea breath tests for Helicobacter pylori at an Irish tertiary hospital from 2016-2023 showed declining diagnostic positivity (19% overall, falling from 30% to 18.5%) but high post-eradication positivity (28%) and frequent false negatives (40% of retested symptomatic patients).

KEY POINTS

- Of 6684 urea breath tests performed, overall positivity was 23.77%, with diagnostic test positivity at 19% and declining approximately 2% annually from 2016-2022.
- Post-eradication testing showed 28% positivity, with females significantly more likely to remain positive than males (32% vs 23%, p=0.0046).
- Among 83 patients retested after initial negative results due to persistent symptoms, 40% tested positive, representing a potential false negative rate.
- Males were significantly less likely to attend follow-up testing after positive results compared to females (46% vs 58%, p=0.0017).
- The study provides local Irish epidemiological data on H. pylori burden and suggests challenges with treatment failure and test accuracy that may inform detection and management strategies.

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