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## False-Positive Aplisol<sup>®</sup> PPD Reactions

During the past six months, the Section of Epidemiology has received reports of an unusual number of apparently false-positive Aplisol<sup>®</sup> (Parke-Davis) PPD skin test reactions. A number of persons reported to have significant induration reactions to Aplisol<sup>®</sup>--but no known exposure to tuberculosis--have had no reaction to a second PPD skin test using Tubersol<sup>®</sup> (Connaught Laboratories, Inc.).

At two Public Health Centers, a non-random sample of persons recently found to have Aplisol<sup>®</sup> PPD induration reactions  $\geq 10$  mm consented to re-testing with Tubersol<sup>®</sup>. At the first health center, ten (83 %) of 12 re-tested persons had a Tubersol<sup>®</sup> PPD induration reaction  $< 10$  mm (a "negative" reaction). The second health center reported that nine (60%) of 15 re-tested persons had a negative Tubersol<sup>®</sup> reaction. At the Tuberculosis Clinic of the Municipality of Anchorage Health Department, 36 clients whose tuberculin skin-test status was unknown were tested simultaneously with Aplisol<sup>®</sup> and Tubersol<sup>®</sup>: one of six Aplisol<sup>®</sup> PPD reactors had no reaction to a Tubersol<sup>®</sup> skin test.

These findings have led us to believe that induration reactions resulting from Aplisol<sup>®</sup> skin tests may not be reliable. The Division of Public Health has decided that it will no longer supply Aplisol<sup>®</sup>; instead, it will distribute Tubersol<sup>®</sup> to public and private health-care providers who request tuberculin PPD skin-test material.

Health-care providers may wish to continue using supplies of Aplisol<sup>®</sup> they have on hand; however, any significant induration reactions should be confirmed with Tubersol<sup>®</sup>. Negative reactions to Aplisol<sup>®</sup> can be considered reliable.

The Tuberculosis Control Program's recommendations regarding persons with significant induration reactions to Aplisol<sup>®</sup> are as follows:

- Aplisol<sup>®</sup> tuberculin reactors who had radiographic or other clinical evidence of tuberculosis or who had a high probability of recent infection with *M. tuberculosis* (e.g., close contacts of a tuberculosis case, immigrants from countries with high rates of tuberculosis disease) need not necessarily be retested, since their reactions probably represent truly positive reactions. Decisions to retest these individuals should be based on the strength of the evidence for tuberculosis infection.
- Other persons identified as Aplisol<sup>®</sup> tuberculin reactors during the past 6-9 months should be considered for retesting with Tubersol<sup>®</sup>.

(Contributed by Michael Jones, MD, Section of Epidemiology. Thanks to the following Public Health Nurses: Marjorie Campbell, Lois Daubney, Nancy McDonnell Kent, Darlene Reed, and Vicky Webb.)