

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS OF MEDICAL COLLEGES

POSITION STATEMENT

6 APRIL 2020

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPECIALIST MEDICAL ADVICE IN THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19

The Council of Presidents of Medical Colleges is the peak forum for specialist medicine in Australia, comprising all of Australia's specialist Medical Colleges, half of which are also located in New Zealand. We educate and train Australia's future doctors to provide the highest quality medical care.

Specialist medical practitioners know the challenges being faced by Australians in this unique time of COVID-19 pandemic. Only specialist medical practitioners possess the comprehensive specialist scope of knowledge and experience to provide the expert advice that Australians expect and deserve. It is therefore vital that advice is sought from specialists on therapeutics, testing and guidelines in the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19.

Rapid Point of Care Testing: The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) are the experts in pathology and microbiology and have confirmed the molecular testing on a single throat with deep nasal swab is the current test of choice for the diagnosis of COVID-19 infection. The RCPA has cautioned against the use of IgG/IgM rapid point of care testing as they do not play a role in the diagnosis, and will miss patients in the early stages of disease when they are infectious to other people. (1)

Use of CT Scans to screen for COVID IS not recommended: The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists are the experts in medical radiation and radiology and have advised application of normal appropriate use criteria for imaging patients presenting with an acute respiratory illness. RANZCR advise computerized tomography (CT) scanning should not be used for routine screening for COVID-19 disease in symptomatic or asymptomatic people due to its unclear specificity and lack of sensitivity, particularly in the earlier phases of the illness. Chest radiography (chest x - ray) is the mainstay of imaging in symptomatic patients with suspected or confirmed covid - 19. (2)

To access each specialist Medical College for specialist medical advice please go to: <https://cpmc.edu.au/our-members/> and click on the logo.

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References:

(1): <https://www.rcpa.edu.au/getattachment/6a74686a-e558-4efa-bc6c-a9921b7837df/RCPA-advises-against-COVID-19-IgGIgM-rapid-tests-f.aspx>

(2): <https://www.ranzcr.com/our-work/coronavirus/position-statements-and-guidance>