

Point-of-care tests for urinary tract infections to reduce antimicrobial resistance: a systematic review and conceptual economic model

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Published November 2024

DOI: 10.3310/PTMV8524

Plain language summary

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Health Technology Assessment 2024; Vol. 28; No. 77

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NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

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What is the problem?

Urine infections are very common but can be difficult to diagnose. A GP will diagnose a urine infection based on symptoms, and sometimes they will send a urine sample to the lab. The GP will usually give antibiotics before knowing the lab test results (which can take up to a week). Some people will be given the wrong antibiotics, and some will be given antibiotics unnecessarily.

New 'rapid tests' can be done in the GP surgery or pharmacy and will quickly tell (some in just a few minutes) whether someone has a urine infection. Some tests can also tell which bug is causing the infection and which antibiotics will work best.

What did we do?

We wanted to know whether using 'rapid tests' to diagnose urine infections means that more people are correctly diagnosed, diagnosed more quickly, and treated with the right antibiotics more quickly. We also wanted to know whether these tests are a good use of NHS money. We reviewed existing research and developed an economic (cost) model.

What did we find?

There is very little information available on these 'rapid tests'. Tests were only looked at by a few studies each, and the people studied were different. Rapid tests that can detect a urine infection in under 40 minutes showed promise, but there were not enough data to know whether they are a good use of NHS money. More studies are needed to answer this question and to determine whether results vary across different populations.

ISSN 2046-4924 (Online)

Impact factor: 3.6

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This article

The research reported in this issue of the journal was commissioned and funded by the Evidence Synthesis Programme on behalf of NICE as award number NIHR135710. The protocol was agreed in December 2022. The draft manuscript began editorial review in February 2023 and was accepted for publication in May 2024. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HTA editors and publisher have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' manuscript and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this article.

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