

**ER/PR coverage****CBC TV****Monday, December 11, 2006**

Chris O'Neil Yates: The Eastern Health corporation says it will resume breast cancer screen tests at it's lab in St. John's next year. The corporation suspended testing at the lab 18 months ago after problems with breast cancer screening tests. Today, Eastern Health gave reporters a tour of the lab but they're still not confirming how many of the tests show false results.

From 1997 to 2005, Eastern Health conducted 2,760 tests on women with breast cancer to determine their estrogen levels, that's to assess whether they needed hormonal therapy such as Tamoxifen. After they discovered problems, 939 samples had to be retested at Mount Sinai in Toronto. Because of a class action lawsuit, Eastern Health will not say how many of those samples had a false result. Eastern Health will only say that 117 patients required treatment changes. The corporation also won't say how many of these patients are part of the retesting or how many people who passed away had the initial false test. Eastern Health says it's putting quality assurance measures in place to restore public confidence before it resumes this test and says it doesn't know how the false results happened.

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Glen Carter: A mistake in testing led to incorrect treatment for 117 women in this province suffering from breast cancer. That is the conclusion of an 18 month investigation by Eastern Health. Today, it released the results of independent retesting of thousands of breast cancer samples going back a decade. For most, the mistake made no difference but for dozens, it made a huge impact in the decisions that were made to save their lives. NTV's Carolyn Stokes reports.

Carolyn Stokes: Today, Eastern Health held a technical briefing and laboratory tour for the media to shed some light on the complicated process of testing breast cancer samples for hormone receptivity.

Dr. Denic: I don't know if it will make you more confused that you know of, or at least try to make you understand what we do and why the thing is the way that it is but every single year we are going to do better. Science is going to do better.

Carolyn Stokes: In May of 2005, after the laboratory process changed from semi-automated to fully automated, it was discovered that the estrogen progesterone or ER/PR tests being conducted at the Health Sciences Centre were giving incorrect results. Those results affected whether a patient received certain treatment drugs such as Tomoxifen.

Dr. Denic: This lab is working for the patient. I guarantee you. Every single person working over there is working for the patient and every single person in this lab had great concerns in regard to this issue because there's no person in this lab that his or her family has been stricken by cancer.

Carolyn Stokes: Eastern Health referred almost 3000 samples dating back to 1997 and sent over 900 to Mount Sinai Hospital to be retested. As a result, 117 women were told they were given inappropriate cancer treatments. That number doesn't include the amount of false results or patients who are now deceased. Eastern Health says that number can't be released due to a class action lawsuit that has been launched against them.

Dr. Denic: We have excellent mechanism in place that if anything goes wrong, down the road, we can catch.

Carolyn Stokes: The laboratory has stopped ER/PR testing during an external review of their system and Eastern Health says new quality controls have been implemented. The testing is scheduled to begin again in two months time. Carolyn Stokes, NTV News.