

10 Investigations

10.1 Pathology ordering by patient sex

The most frequently ordered pathology tests emanating from encounters with male and female patients are provided in Table 10.1. The overall rate of orders for pathology tests was significantly lower at encounters with male patients (23.1 per 100 encounters) than at those with female patients (28.7). Encounters with male patients generated significantly lower order rates for:

- full blood counts (2.9 per 100 male encounters and 3.7 at female encounters)
- urine MC&S (1.0 compared with 2.0 for females)
- thyroid function tests (0.6 compared with 1.7 female encounters).

Table 10.1: The ten most frequently ordered pathology tests by patient sex

Pathology test type	Male (n = 44,308)				Female (n = 59,366)			
	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL
Full blood count	1	2.9	2.5	3.3	1	3.7	3.4	4.0
Liver function	2	1.6	1.1	2.1	5	1.4	1.0	1.8
Lipids	3	1.6	1.1	2.1	8	1.0	0.6	1.3
Glucose	4	1.3	0.9	1.7	7	1.1	0.7	1.4
Electrolytes, urea & creatinine	5	1.2	0.6	1.8	6	1.1	0.7	1.5
Urine MC&S	6	1.0	0.6	1.3	3	2.0	1.8	2.2
Prostate-specific antigen	7	0.9	0.5	1.3	—	—	—	—
Pathology	8	0.7	0.0	1.7	10	0.8	0.0	1.8
Electrolyte & liver function test	9	0.7	0.0	1.8	11	0.7	0.0	1.4
Erythrocyte sedimentation rate	10	0.7	0.2	1.1	9	0.9	0.6	1.2
Pap smear	—	—	—	—	2	2.6	2.2	2.9
**Thyroid function	12	0.6	0.2	1.0	4	1.7	1.5	2.0
<i>Subtotal (n, %)</i>	<i>5,838</i>	<i>57.0</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>10,052</i>	<i>58.9</i>	<i>..</i>	<i>..</i>
Total pathology tests (n)	10,238	23.1	21.7	24.6	17,059	28.7	27.4	30.1

** Indicates pathology orders that were included in the 10 most common orders for female patients, not included in the ten most common for male patients.

Note: Shading indicates statistically significant differences. Encs— encounter; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.

10.2 Imaging orders by patient sex

Table 10.2 outlines the most frequently ordered imaging tests for encounters with male and female patients, in rank order for male encounters. Except for the rates of sex-specific imaging orders, there were no significant differences in imaging order rates at encounters with male and female patients.

Table 10.2: The ten most frequent imaging orders by patient sex

Imaging test ordered	Male (n = 44,308)				Female (n = 59,366)			
	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rank	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL
X-ray; chest	1	1.2	0.9	1.4	1	0.9	0.7	1.1
X-ray; knee	2	0.5	0.1	0.9	6	0.3	0.0	0.6
X-ray; spine lumbosacral	3	0.3	0.0	1.0	9	0.2	0.0	0.6
X-ray; shoulder	4	0.2	0.0	0.8	11	0.2	0.0	0.7
X-ray; ankle	5	0.2	0.0	0.8	10	0.2	0.0	0.6
Ultrasound; abdomen	6	0.2	0.0	0.8	7	0.3	0.0	0.6
Ultrasound; shoulder	7	0.2	0.0	0.8	17	0.1	0.0	0.8
X-ray; wrist	8	0.2	0.0	0.8	14	0.1	0.0	0.6
X-ray; finger(s)/thumb	9	0.2	0.0	0.8	32	0.8	0.0	0.7
X-ray; spine lumbar	10	0.2	0.0	1.1	16	0.1	0.0	0.9
**Mammography; F	—	—	—	—	2	0.6	0.3	0.9
**Ultrasound; pelvis	93	0.1	0.0	2.8	3	0.6	0.3	0.9
**Ultrasound breast; F	—	—	—	—	4	0.4	0.0	0.8
**X-ray; foot/feet	13	0.1	0.0	0.8	5	0.3	0.0	0.6
<i>Subtotal (n, %)</i>	<i>1,540</i>	<i>18.8</i>	<i>. .</i>	<i>. .</i>	<i>2,580</i>	<i>55.2</i>	<i>. .</i>	<i>. .</i>
Total imaging tests (n)	3,155	7.1	6.7	7.6	4,670	7.9	7.5	8.3

** Indicates imaging orders included in the 10 most common orders for female patients, not included in the 10 most frequent for male patients.

Note: Encs— encounter; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.