approach to standardising and approving diagnostic technologies will be discussed.

THE IMMUNOCAP ISAC MICROARRAY IN ALLERGY DIAGNOSIS

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The ImmunoCAP ISAC microarray (Thermofisher Phadia) allows simultaneous detection of allergen specific IgE to a wide range of clinically important individual allergen molecules. Since January 2009 our laboratory has offered the ISAC microarray an experience of more than 360 patient profiles. Allergens in the microarray have been developed from purified native and recombinant sources.

Potential advantages are that it can (i) be performed on very small volume samples (20 μL), (ii) provide a snapshot of sensitisations to different classes of allergen molecules, (iii) explain divergent clinical phenomena (nuisance or serious) in persons with sensitisations to common allergens, and (iv) cost-effectively profile individual allergen components when more than a few are of clinical interest. Clinicians who become familiar with ISAC develop an understanding of the patterns of allergen component-related diagnosis and may make better use of individual allergen component ImmunoCAPs. Disadvantages include (i) high, non-rebated reagent cost, (ii) relative focus on birch pollen cross-reactive allergens, (iii) mild loss of sensitivity over individual allergen ImmunoCAPs, (iv) complexity in reporting and analysis, and (v) non-inclusion of some allergen molecules.

ISAC is an established, robust tool in our laboratory. Careful selection of patients by well-informed clinicians is essential for cost-effectiveness and clinical safety.

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