

### Question 5 – Week of September 3

Which of the following statements below is false regarding the type of colitis as depicted in figure 1?

- A. Metronidazole orally for 10-14 days is the drug of choice
- B. Vancomycin orally for 10-14 days can be used if the diarrhea does not improve during metronidazole treatment, if patient is pregnant or <10 yr of age or if diarrhea is severe
- C. The latex agglutination assay is the “gold standard” stool test for diagnosis
- D. Severe pseudomembranous colitis occurs in only 3%-5% of patients with this infection, but it associated with a mortality rate of up to 65%

Figure 1:



**Answer: C**

All of these statements are true regarding *Clostridium difficile* infection except c. The latex agglutination assay detects bacterial enzyme (glutamate dehydrogenase) and is fast, inexpensive and easy to perform. However it requires anaerobic culture, is not specific for toxin-producing strains and takes 2-5 days. The “gold standard” stool test is the cytotoxin assay which detects toxin B. It is highly sensitive and specific, although it takes 24-48 hours.

Reference:

Feldman M, Friedman L, Brandt L. Sleisenger and Fordtran’s Gastrointestinal and Liver Disease 8<sup>th</sup> edition, Saunders Elsevier, Philadelphia PA 2006: pgs 2395-2407.