

Question 12 – Week of May 5

A young man with chronic diarrhea submits a stool sample for ova and parasites. Organisms compatible with ameba are seen. Knowing that 90% of such organisms are nonpathogenic *E. dispar* compared to pathogenic *E. histolytica*, what is the next best diagnostic test?

- A. Serology
- B. Stool PCR
- C. Stool for occult blood
- D. Stool for leukocytes
- E. Stool lactoferrin

Answer: A

Serology will be positive for invasive ameba, i.e. *E. histolytica*, and negative with the nonpathogenic *E. dispar*. Occult blood, leukocytes and lactoferrin are all nonspecific indicators of inflammation. PCR is not widely available.

Reference:

1. Stanley SL, Jr. Amoebiasis. *Lancet* 2003;361:1025-1034.