

# Demand Optimisation Guidance on Vitamin D, Follicle Stimulating Hormone and Urea and Electrolyte testing

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## Aims

Diagnostic tests underpin around 70% of clinician decisions<sup>1</sup>. Improving efficiency and sustainability, by reducing unnecessary or inappropriate testing and reducing workload would improve the efficiency and delivery of the service.

In line with the 2020 Vision, Realistic Medicine and the National Demand Optimisation Group, the network has produced evidence based guidance on the appropriate test requesting for Vitamin D, follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) and U & E (urea and electrolytes). The information provided supports appropriate testing; the right test, at the right time and for the right person. Guiding and educating professionals to reduce waste and unnecessary harm will optimise the resources available, which is particularly relevant under increasing financial constraints. The Vision 2020 promotes a patient to remain in a homely setting; therefore more efficient, accurate testing, should enhance the effectiveness of treatment; therefore this guidance will have positive benefits for patients. Additionally the project aims to promote standardisation across Scotland by reducing variation in testing across Scotland, promoting standardised care.

The number of requests, in particular for Vitamin D has rapidly increased, without many requests being clinically relevant or appropriate. It was therefore vital to reduce the number of tests requested, reducing waste and potential harm with unnecessary testing. The guidance educates the professional on the circumstances where the test provides beneficial clinical information and provides evidence to demonstrate why a test should not be requested.

The network aims to develop more efficient testing strategies and test monitoring, which is particularly important with the projected increase in long term conditions due to the aging population. The vision 2020 supports maintaining service users in their own homes for as long as suitable. Greater efficiency and delivery of the diagnostic test results would support this, with accurate diagnosis, anticipation of patterns in condition and therefore better informing treatment.

## Methods

Experts in the field of Biochemistry were consulted and discussed the criteria for the appropriate conditions where the test should be requested. The guidance was developed and peer reviewed. Lead scientists throughout Scotland were included in the discussion, to ensure all NHS Boards are represented and agreed on the issued guidance.

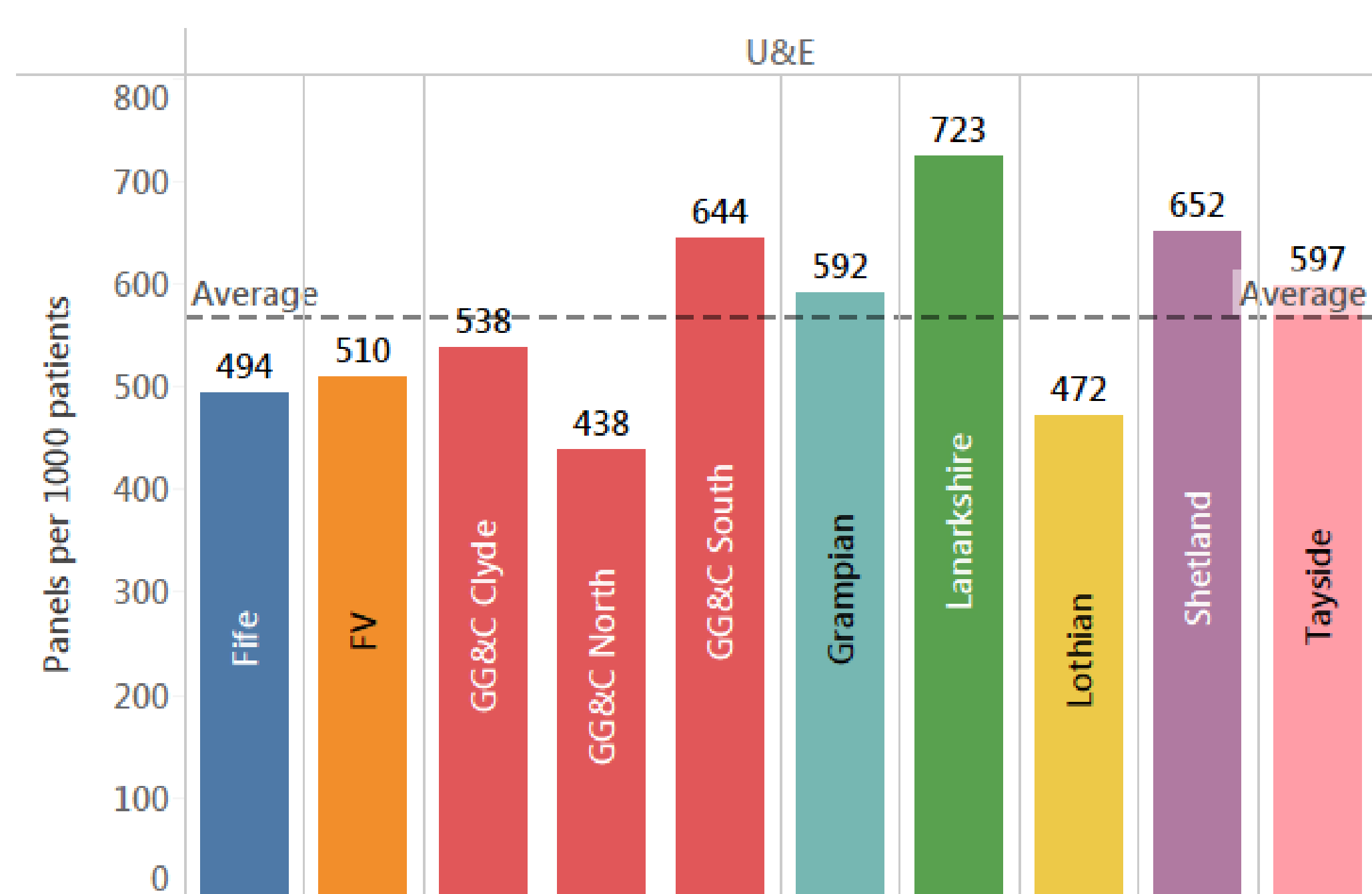


Figure 1: U&E Test Requesting Per NHS Board

## Outcomes / results

The guidance documents have been ratified and circulated. The network is continuing to promote the guidance. The baseline data prior to the guidance being issued has been collected and the recent data is currently being collated to enable the impact of the guidance to be assessed. The following guidance documents were developed and produced by the network's Demand Optimisation group:

- FSH: Guidance focuses on appropriate use of FSH on the investigation of the menopause
- Vitamin D: Guidance on appropriate testing for 25 OH Vitamin D. Scope covers indications for Vitamin D testing, advises on when measurement not required and guides minimum retesting intervals.
- U/E profile in Primary Care: Advise on appropriate profile of tests for UE measurement in primary care.

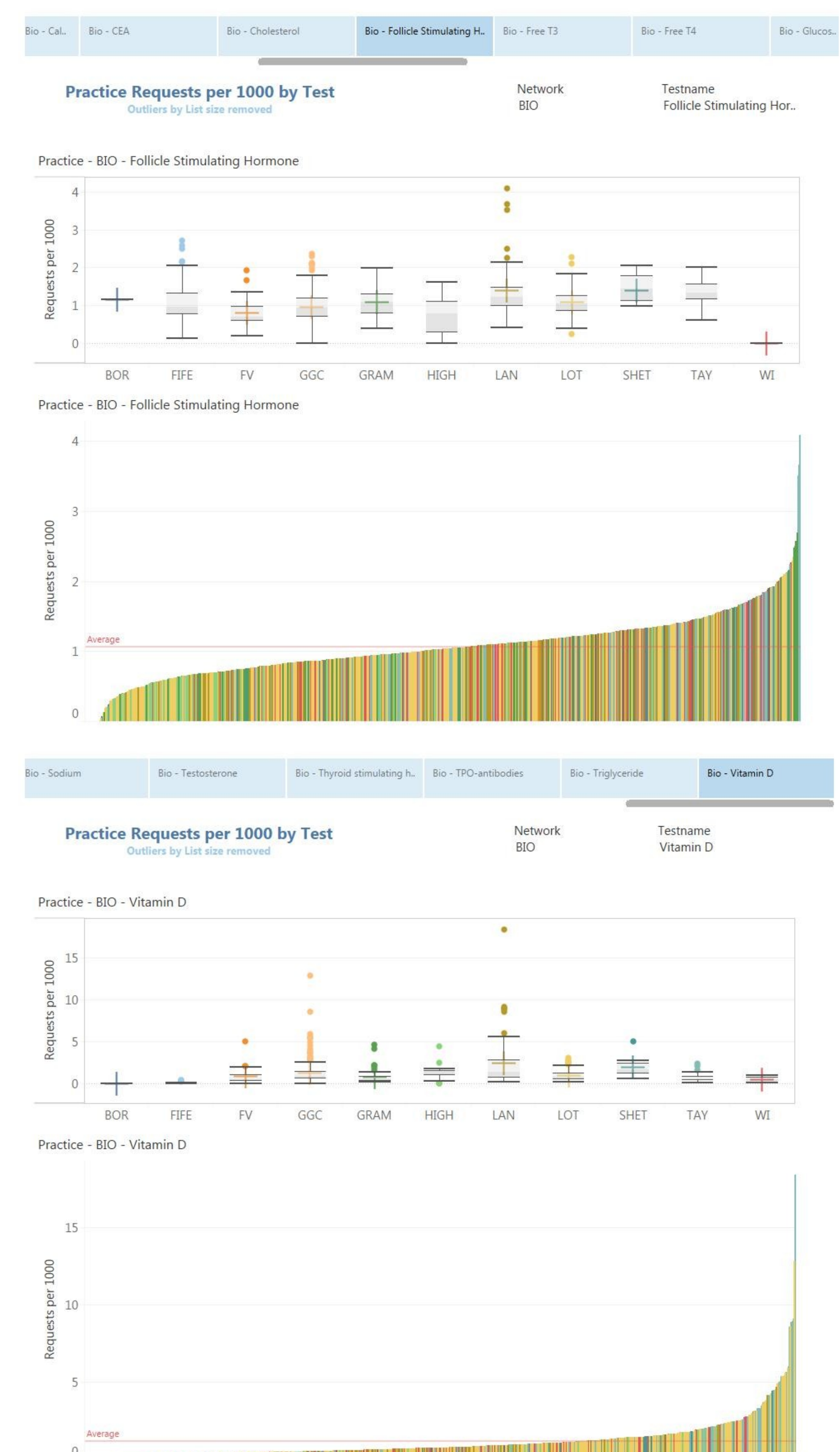


Figure 2: Vitamin D and FSH Data from Atlas of Variation

## Conclusions

- The published guidance promotes;
- The appropriate, evidence based use of tests
  - Equality of access to testing across Scotland
  - Reducing waste

The published guidance is available online: <https://www.clinicalbiochemistry.scot.nhs.uk/resources/documents/>. An example of one of the guidance documents can be seen below. A clear structure of recommendation, background, rationale, implementation and supporting evidence can be seen. These documents represent a consensus agreed across all NHS Boards through SCBN. This information can be used to inform education of users and provide material to include in electronic requesting interfaces.

As the guidance was recently published the impact of the guidance is yet to be measured. It will be done through the network's next benchmarking report.

## References

- 1 Project Working Group Report (2007) Scottish Government: 'Delivering for Health'. Review of Specialised Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Services in Scotland.

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