

Haematology – Clinical Guidelines: Macrocytosis– GP Referral Guidelines

Introduction

The differential diagnosis of red cell macrocytosis (mean corpuscular volume >98fl) includes B12 and folate deficiency, excess alcohol consumption, hypothyroidism, reticulocytosis, hypothyroidism and myelodysplastic syndrome.

Uncomplicated B12 or folate deficiency does not require routine referral for haematology outpatient assessment.

Appropriate investigation in primary care prior to referral:

- B12 and folate levels (plus intrinsic factor and GPC Abs in B12 deficiency)
- Blood film examination and reticulocyte count
- Liver and thyroid biochemistry
- Lipids/cholesterol levels
- Immunoglobulins and protein electrophoresis
- Alcohol history and appropriate lifestyle modification

Referral for specialist opinion should be considered for:

- Suspected myelodysplastic syndrome (based on blood film report)
- MCV > 100 fl with accompanying cytopenia (excluding B12 / folate deficiency)
- Persistent unexplained MCV > 104 fl
- B12 deficiency of uncertain cause requiring further investigation