

WADA Technical Document – TD2017NA

Document Number:	TD2017NA	Version Number:	1.0
Written by:	WADA Laboratory Expert Group	Approved by:	WADA Executive Committee
Approval Date:	17 May 2017	Effective Date:	1 September 2017

HARMONIZATION OF ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF 19-NORSTEROIDS RELATED TO NANDROLONE

1.0 Introduction

This document has been established to harmonize the Confirmation Procedure for the analysis and reporting of findings for 19-norsteroids related to nandrolone by Laboratories.

The detection of the *Use* of nandrolone (19-nortestosterone) and other 19-norsteroids (*e.g.* 19-norandrostenedione, 19-norandrostenediol) is based primarily upon the identification of the main urinary *Metabolite*, 19-norandrosterone (19-NA). More than one *Metabolite* of administered 19-norsteroids may be detected in urine *Samples* and reported [*e.g.* 19-noretiocholanolone (19-NE)]; however, the identification of 19-NA, including the demonstration, when required, that the 19-NA is not of endogenous origin¹, is sufficient to report an *Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF)*.

Under specific circumstances, as described below, additional Analytical Testing and reporting may be required.

2.0 Initial Testing Procedure

The initial test must detect the presence of 19-NA in urine *Samples* at levels greater than 1 ng/mL and also provide its estimated concentration when lower or equal to 15 ng/mL in order to guide the Confirmation Procedure. The Initial Testing Procedure shall include the following characteristics:

- A single calibration point at 15 ng/mL;
- An appropriate deuterated internal standard;
- The use of a negative and a positive quality control (QC) samples.

3.0 Confirmation Procedures

In addition to meeting the identification criteria described in the IDCR Technical Document [1], the Laboratory shall confirm the estimated concentration of 19-NA and/or perform GC/C/IRMS analysis to establish the origin (endogenous¹ or exogenous) of the 19-NA detected.

¹ In the context of this Technical Document, “endogenous” origins of 19-NA include i) trace amounts normally present in males and females; ii) pregnancy; iii) *in-situ* microbial degradation of androsterone (A) to 19-NA; iv) consumption of the offal of intact, non-castrated pigs.

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3.1 Identification and Estimation of Concentration

The Confirmation Procedure to estimate the concentration of 19-NA in the *Sample* shall include the following characteristics:

- A single calibration point at 15 ng/mL, preferably with the 19-NA concentration based on or traceable to a Certified Reference Material;
- An appropriate deuterated internal standard (*e.g.* 19-NA-d₄-glucuronide);
- The use of a negative QC sample (at less than 2.5 ng/mL) and a positive QC sample (at greater than 15 ng/mL).

3.2 GC/C/IRMS Analysis

The GC/C/IRMS method to establish the origin of the 19-NA detected shall include the following characteristics (also refer to the TDIRMS [2] for general method characteristics):

- Each sequence of analysis by GC/C/IRMS shall include:
 - a negative QC urine: $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values of 19-NA and endogenous reference compound (ERC) in a normal endogenous range (*i.e.* between -16‰ and -26‰)², with an absolute difference in $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values ($\Delta\delta$) between ERC and 19-NA not greater than (\leq)3‰; and
 - a positive QC urine: $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ value of ERC in a normal endogenous range (*i.e.* between -16‰ and -26‰), with an absolute $\Delta\delta$ between ERC and 19-NA greater than 3‰.

These controls shall be subjected to the same sample preparation procedure as the *Sample Aliquot*.

- The GC/C/IRMS analysis shall include the confirmation of the 19-NA peak identity³.

² Range of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ isotopic signatures around the world; the QC samples will reflect the geographical location of the Laboratory and do not have to cover the entire possible range of $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values.

³ For example, confirmation by GC/MS analysis performed under comparable chromatographic conditions. The purpose is to produce a chromatogram with similar peak profiles so that the spectra can be used to identify the peak(s) of interest. Minor differences in retention time between the two techniques are expected.

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GC/C/IRMS analysis shall be performed in the following cases⁴:

- *Samples* in which the concentration of 19-NA is estimated between 2.5 and 15 ng/mL⁵, except in cases of pregnancy or in the presence of tetrahydronorethisterone;
- In cases of pregnancy, when the estimated 19-NA concentration is greater than 15 ng/mL^{5, 6}.

Furthermore, GC/C/IRMS analysis may be performed on *Samples* containing 19-NA at estimated concentrations not greater than 2.5 ng/mL. In such cases, a positive GC/C/IRMS analysis showing the presence of 19-NA of exogenous origin is sufficient evidence to report an *AAF*.

Laboratories that do not have the analytical capacity to perform GC/C/IRMS analysis for 19-NA shall have *Samples* transferred to and analyzed by another Laboratory that has such analytical capacity.

Due to the occurrence of preparations of 19-norsteroids with a carbon isotopic signature (¹³C/¹²C) close to that of endogenous human urinary steroids (*e.g.* δ_{19-NA} = -20 ‰ to -24 ‰), the result of the GC/C/IRMS analysis of the produced 19-NA may not readily indicate its exogenous origin in some populations of *Athletes*. Therefore, in *Samples* from males and non-pregnant females, when the estimated concentration of 19-NA is greater than 2.5 ng/mL and the result of the GC/C/IRMS analysis is negative (*i.e.* not consistent with an exogenous origin of 19-NA) or inconclusive, the Laboratory shall determine the ratio of 19-NA to 19-NE based on the relative signals from the GC/MS analysis⁷. This ratio may serve as a possible

⁴ To reject the hypothesis of endogenous or *in-situ* 19-NA formation the following criteria, based on the application of GC/C/IRMS analysis, shall be met simultaneously:

- i- The absolute Δδ value between the endogenous reference compound (ERC) [*e.g.* A or pregnanediol (PD)] and 19-NA, *i.e.* |Δδ| = |δ_{ERC} - δ_{19-NA}|, is greater than 3‰, and
- ii- The standard combined uncertainty (*u_c*) associated with the determination of δ¹³C values, as estimated by the Laboratory during the GC/C/IRMS method validation, is not greater than 1.0 ‰ (*u_{c,Max}*).

⁵ After adjustment for the urine specific gravity (SG), if SG > 1.020, according to:

$$\text{Conc}_{1.020} = \frac{(1.020 - 1)}{(\text{SG}_{\text{sample}} - 1)} \cdot \text{Conc}_{\text{measured}}$$

⁶ In cases of pregnancy, when the estimated concentration of 19-NA in a urine *Sample* is between 2.5 and 15 ng/mL, the GC/C/IRMS analysis may also be performed to ascertain the endogenous origin of 19-NA.

⁷ The response of 19-NA and 19-NE is assumed to be sufficiently similar.

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indicator of the administration of 19-norsteroids by excluding the *in-situ* formation of 19-NA [3].

3.3 Additional Tests

3.3.1 Test for Norethisterone and Pregnancy

19-NA is excreted during pregnancy and as a minor *Metabolite* of norethisterone [4], a progestogen agent of permitted use present in some oral contraceptives. Therefore, when the estimated concentration of 19-NA exceeds 2.5 ng/mL in the urine *Sample* of a female *Athlete*, the Laboratory shall perform:

- an analysis for the use of norethisterone-based contraceptives (*e.g.* detection of tetrahydronorethisterone), and if negative
- an analysis for pregnancy [*e.g.* based on the measurement of urinary human Chorionic Gonadotrophin (hCG)].

3.3.2 Test for demethylation

In addition, but rarely, 19-NA may be produced in urine *Samples*, in small concentrations, by *in-situ* 19-demethylation of androsterone (A) [5]. The reaction being more efficient with the 5 β -isomer (*i.e.* 19-NE), such *Samples* show a lower than usual ratio of 19-NA to 19-NE (*i.e.* ≤ 3), which is also less than the ratio of their respective urinary precursors androsterone(A)/etiocholanolone(Etio)⁸. This possible *in-situ* formation of 19-NA can be verified by GC/C/IRMS analysis [3, 6].

3.3 "B" Sample Confirmation Procedure

- In all cases, when the AAF for the "A" *Sample* is based on the results of a GC/C/IRMS analysis, the "B" Sample Confirmation Procedure also requires the GC/C/IRMS analysis (and identification of 19-NA);
- In all other cases, *i.e.* when the estimated concentration of 19-NA is shown to be greater than 15 ng/mL in a *Sample* collected from a male or a non-pregnant female *Athlete*, the "B" Sample Confirmation Procedure requires the identification of 19-NA only.

⁸ In the absence of inhibitors of 5 α -reductase (*e.g.* finasteride).

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4.0 Reporting

The Laboratory shall report 19-NA detected in a *Sample* from a male or a female *Athlete* as defined below:

A. *Samples from pregnant female Athletes*

No reference to the pregnancy status of an *Athlete* shall be reported in any case.

- *Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF):*

- *Samples* for which the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis are consistent with the exogenous origin of 19-NA (see section 3.2 above)⁴.

[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹ and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis¹⁰ shall be included in the Test Report].

- *Atypical Finding (ATF):*

- *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is greater than 15 ng/mL⁵ and the results of the mandatory GC/C/IRMS analysis are inconclusive or consistent with an endogenous origin of 19-NA (see section 3.2 above)⁴.

[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹ and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis¹⁰ shall be included in the Test Report].

- “No *Prohibited Substance* or *Method* on the test menu was detected”:

- No other *Prohibited Substance* or *Prohibited Method* has been confirmed in the *Sample*, and
- *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is equal to or less than (\leq) 15 ng/mL⁵ and the GC/C/IRMS analysis was either not performed or the results are inconclusive/consistent with an endogenous origin of 19-NA (section 3.2 above)⁴.

⁹ No strict quantification (and, therefore, no Measurement Uncertainty estimation) is required in the Confirmation Procedure for 19-NA. The application of a one-point calibrator at 15 ng/mL and appropriate QC samples is sufficient to confirm the estimated 19-NA concentration. The result shall be expressed as “ \leq 15 ng/mL” or “ $>$ 15 ng/mL”, as applicable.

¹⁰ The Test Report for the GC/C/IRMS analysis shall include a comment indicating whether or not the GC/C/IRMS finding is consistent with an exogenous origin of 19-NA, the $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values for 19-NA and ERC as well as the associated u_c , expressed in ‰ units.

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B. *Samples* from female *Athletes* using norethisterone

- *Atypical Finding (ATF)*:
 - *Samples* for which the 19-NA concentration is estimated to be greater than 10 ng/mL⁵.

[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹ shall be included in the Test Report. In addition, a comment shall be added describing the finding that demonstrates the use of norethisterone¹¹ (e.g. "19-norandrosterone (19-NA) was found in the *Sample* at an estimated concentration > 10 ng/mL. Tetrahydronorethisterone, a *Metabolite* of norethisterone, was also detected in the *Sample*)].
 - "No *Prohibited Substance* or *Method* on the test menu was detected":
 - No other *Prohibited Substance* or *Prohibited Method* has been confirmed in the *Sample*, and
 - *Samples* for which the 19-NA concentration is equal to or less than (\leq) 10 ng/mL⁵.

[In this case, no reference to the use of norethisterone shall be included in the Test Report]

C. *Samples* from male or female *Athletes* (neither pregnant nor using norethisterone)

- *Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF)*:
 - *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is greater than 15 ng/mL⁵.

[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹ shall be included in the Test Report. In addition, for female *Athletes*, a comment shall be added explaining that pregnancy and the use of norethisterone were excluded (e.g. "the 19-NA finding is not consistent with pregnancy or the use of norethisterone");
 - *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is equal to or less than (\leq) 15 ng/mL⁵ and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis are consistent with an exogenous origin of 19-NA (see section 3.2 above)⁴.

[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹ and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis¹⁰ shall be included in the Test Report. In addition, for female *Athletes*, a comment shall be added explaining that the use of norethisterone was

¹¹ Or of any other substance that is converted to norethisterone and further metabolized to tetrahydronorethisterone.

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excluded (e.g. “the 19-NA finding is not consistent with the use of norethisterone”).

- *Atypical Finding (ATF)*:
 - *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is equal to or less than (\leq) 15 ng/mL⁵ and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis are inconclusive or consistent with an endogenous origin of 19-NA (see section 3.2 above)⁴, and the ratio of 19-NA to 19-NE is greater than 3.
[The estimated concentration of 19-NA⁹, the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis¹⁰ and the ratio of 19-NA to 19-NE shall be included in the Test Report. A comment shall be added explaining that the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis were inconclusive (e.g. due to the presence of interfering compound(s) or any other factor preventing a reliable GC/C/IRMS measurement) or consistent with an endogenous origin of 19-NA. In addition, for female *Athletes*, a comment shall be added explaining that pregnancy was excluded (e.g. “the 19-NA finding is not consistent with pregnancy”).]
- “No *Prohibited Substance* or *Method* on the test menu was detected”:
 - No other *Prohibited Substance* or *Prohibited Method* has been confirmed in the *Sample*, and
 - *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is equal to or less than (\leq) 2.5 ng/mL⁵ (and too low to perform GC/C/IRMS analysis);
 - *Samples* for which the estimated 19-NA concentration is greater than 2.5 ng/mL but not exceeding 15 ng/mL⁵, and the ratio of 19-NA to 19-NE is not greater than (\leq) 3, and the results of the GC/C/IRMS analysis are consistent with an endogenous origin (*i.e. in-situ* formation) of 19-NA (see section 3.2 above)⁴.

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5.0 References

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Annex A – Flowchart for 19-NA findings

