

Diagnostics manufacturer: "Countering shortages - enabling further technologies"

Berlin - In view of the skyrocketing occupancy of the medical laboratories when testing for the coronavirus, the Association of the Diagnostics Industry considers a review of the test strategy of the federal and state governments to be understandable. VDGH CEO Ulrich Schmid explains: "In the pandemic, comprehensive and targeted testing for the coronavirus is essential. It is the responsibility of politicians to readjust the test strategy if necessary. New test technologies can complement existing diagnostics and alleviate bottlenecks. "

The diagnostics industry increased its capacities by 1,800 percent from February to June 2020 alone. Despite exploding demand worldwide, manufacturers of reagents, test kits and devices can ensure delivery in Germany. However, the number of acute diagnostics (PCR tests) carried out in medical laboratories, which has increased significantly in recent weeks, and the high level of capacity utilization on all sides indicate a need for action.

The diagnostics industry can provide additional test technologies that are also available for direct pathogen detection. Shortages in acute diagnosis can thus be countered. The head of the association Schmid says that the way of working was checked with high pressure, which can also be used in specialist work as well as close to the patient. Antigen testing offers great potential. They enable quick test results and are broadly applicable. In addition, near-patient PCR test applications (point-of-care tests) and multiplex tests, e.g. B. detecting and differentiating coronaviruses and influenza viruses in one step is a sensible solution for pathogen detection.

"The test manufacturers who have become members of the VDGH put great importance to a qualitative, accurate test. To bring them to production readiness though requires know how and investments of the industry," Schmid stresses. The industry association appeals to politicians to send a clear signal about the elements of a future test strategy and to create reliable framework conditions for test production and application. The first antigen tests will be available in autumn.

Two thirds of the more than 100 VDGH company members enable research into the coronavirus and are involved in the development and production of tests. The proportion of employees involved in R&D in the life science research and in vitro diagnostics sectors is 13 % - a top figure in the industry. Infection diagnostics is a segment of laboratory diagnostics. In all other cases of routine diagnostics less tests are run, since health services are used cautiously less as a result of the lockdown.

The German Diagnostics Industry Association (VDGH) represents the interests of more than 100 companies operating in Germany with a total turnover of 4.5 billion euros. They produce examination systems and reagents for the diagnosis of human diseases, with which a turnover of 2.2 billion euros is achieved, as well as instruments, reagents, test systems and consumables for research in the life sciences, with which a turnover of 2.3 billion euros is achieved.

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