

## **MyBio's Dr Linda Nolan: Antigen tests will reopen Ireland**

### **Kilkenny life sciences entrepreneur Dr Linda Nolan of [MyBio](#) calls for faster take-up of antigen testing if Ireland is to learn how to live with Covid-19 for the next two-to-three years.**

While many are looking at big pharma giants with the hope that a miracle vaccine may bring the world back to the way it was before Covid-19, the chances are it could be years before such a vaccine reaches the broader population.

Instead, a young Kilkenny entrepreneur Dr Linda Nolan from MyBio has secured a way to enable businesses and societies to live with Covid-19 through faster testing processes known as antigen testing.

MyBio has rolled out what it claims to be the fastest and most accurate antigen test that takes just 15 minutes and is 99pc accurate.

The company has secured supply of the MöLab Covid-19 Rapid Antigen Test and is already working with many businesses, including food manufacturers, to contain the virus, and especially to identify asymptomatic carriers before it is too late.

Established 11 years ago by Dr Nolan, Mybio is a premium supplier of research products, technology and expertise and is at the forefront of innovation in life sciences. The company is an exclusive supplier of many of the world's leading bioscience reagents to the Irish market. "We work with some of the leading brands in life sciences and we represent the brand as if it's our own."

### **Waiting for a vaccine may not be the answer**

HSE CEO Paul Reid has warned that even if a Covid-19 vaccine is developed, Ireland will be dealing with the virus for a long time. The Centre for Global Development estimates that there is a 50pc chance of a vaccine by April 2021 and an 85pc chance of one by December 2021. The Centre's modelling suggests that it will probably take more than a year to produce enough vaccines to inoculate the world's 50m medical staff, and that it could be September 2023 before we have enough doses for the whole world.

As we have seen, bottlenecks in test results and contact-tracing are only adding to the public's unease and delays in the current HSE system are causing disruptions for schools and businesses, with a typical turnaround of two days, although some people have been waiting up to five days for a result.

Dr Nolan sees the roll-out of antigen testing as a way to reopen the economy. Antigen testing is a new form of testing for Covid-19 that looks for pieces of proteins that make up the SARS-CoV-2 virus, helping to determine if the person has an active Covid-19 infection. Antigen is generally detectable in upper respiratory specimens during the acute phase of infection.

The advantage of Antigen testing is that it is low-cost and can be delivered on site, with no need to send samples off to labs.

MyBio has published a [white paper](#) urging the Irish Government to move to the faster testing system if it wants to keep the economy open and allow society to function normally again.

## **How antigen testing works**

To administer the test, a nasopharyngeal swab is used to obtain a sample for testing. The swab is then placed in an extraction tube and a buffer solution is added. Four drops of the test sample are added to the testing cartridge. Within 15 minutes, the test strip shows a positive or negative result. Performing the test is simple and does not require expensive equipment or delays in sending tests to labs.

Dr Nolan said that she and her team have watched as governments, including Ireland, have struggled to manage the pandemic and stabilise their country's economies and work through solutions.

"We took that journey in parallel with governments and we rolled up our sleeves and worked with our global network of movers and shakers to get the right quality of testing. With the right

messaging and our whitepaper, we are hoping to try to get people to understand the kind of kits that are available and what they can do. We believe the antigen test can be rapidly deployed and can help reopen the economy.

“The private sector has moved faster than the Government and we’ve seen a huge uptake of the antigen test in the last number of weeks. We are deploying thousands of these per week, particularly at food manufacturing companies, nursing homes and more.”

A scientist by training but an entrepreneur at heart, Dr Nolan said that MyBio worked hard to find antigen testing of the right quality for the needs of the Irish economy and that road led to German pharma manufacturer MöLab GmbH for its highly accurate Covid-19 antibody diagnostic test kit which is manufactured under strict EU standards.

She cites Harvard epidemiologist Dr Michael Mina, who is a vocal proponent of the role that rapid antigen tests can play in defeating the virus. Dr Mina argues that while the use of clinical PCR testing is necessary for testing symptomatic people, antigen testing provides a faster and more cost-effective solution for monitoring the asymptomatic spread of Covid-19 in the community.

“I really trust what he is saying, I understand what he is saying and it makes complete sense.”

She said that what Ireland needs is widespread use of a test that is 99pc accurate. “We recently secured a deal with a large food manufacturer. They’re not looking for positives, they’re looking for asymptomatic carriers as well as positives.”

Crucially, she believes availability such test kits could alleviate the pressure on existing testing centres. “The beauty of the test is that it can really help find those asymptomatic carriers. Out of 1,000 people 20 people could be asymptomatic. If you want to contain a virus, rapid and cheap testing done frequently is the key,” Dr Nolan recommended.

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