Use of antigen-detection rapid diagnostic tests

Antigen-detection rapid diagnostic tests (Ag-RDTs) with adequate performance (≥80% sensitivity and ≥97% specificity compared to a NAAT reference assay) offer a way to rapidly detect SARS-CoV-2 infection that does not require laboratory infrastructure.

Ag-RDTs can be used by trained operators* in clinical settings, laboratories or in the community. They can also be used by individuals who wish to self-test to take informed decisions to protect their own health, their families and their communities.

Ag-RDTs detect current SARS-CoV-2 infection and can be used for:

1. **Symptomatic testing**
   - To identify cases of COVID-19, including by testing individuals meeting the suspected case definition.

2. **Testing people who have been exposed**
   - To test asymptomatic individuals at higher risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection*, including health workers or contacts of confirmed/probable cases.

3. **Outbreak investigations**
   - To detect and respond to suspected outbreaks of COVID-19, especially in closed or semi-closed settings including schools, care-homes, cruise ships, prisons, work places and dormitories.

4. **Screening**
   - To screen individuals without symptoms or known exposure to SARS-CoV-2**.

*WHO training materials can be found here:
https://extranet.who.int/hslp/content/sars-cov-2-antigen-rapid-diagnostic-test-training-package
and here: https://openwho.org/courses/SARS-CoV-2-Ag-RDT

* Ag-RDT can be used to test asymptomatic contacts of confirmed cases or health workers, even if the Ag-RDT is not specifically authorized for this use.

** The benefits of widespread asymptomatic testing in settings with no or limited ongoing transmission remains uncertain.

For more information see WHO guidance https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/antigen-detection-in-the-diagnosis-of-sars-cov-2-infection-using-rapid-immunoassays