

# Salivary Prolactin Test For Serotonergic Activity

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## Technology description

### Summary

A noninvasive diagnostic assay improves on previous methods for determining central serotonin functioning, an indicator of susceptibility to aggression, alcohol abuse, obsessive-compulsive disorder and eating disorders. Levels of salivary prolactin can be assayed to determine susceptibility to the set of psychiatric disorders related to central serotonin functioning. Levels of salivary prolactin were found to be positively correlated with levels of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) 5- hydroxyindole acetic acid (5-HIAA), the current measurement of central serotonin functioning. Elevated CSF levels of 5-HIAA are associated with obsessive- compulsive disorders, and reduced levels are associated with violent behavior, alcohol abuse and bulimia. There are an estimated 9 million alcoholics in the United States and currently 0.5% of women 10 to 30 years old have anorexia nervosa while 5% of college-age women have bulimia. The user-friendliness and reduced costs of the saliva assay suggest possible candidacy for mass screenings to determine susceptibility to various psychiatric disorders.

### Institution

[NIH - National Institutes of Health](#)

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