QUESTION 32 Pernicious anemia
Which of the following findings is most specific for a diagnosis of pernicious anaemia?
A. A low serum vitamin B12 level.
B. An elevated fasting homocysteine level.
C. An elevated serum gastrin level.
D. A positive gastric parietal cell antibody.
E. A positive intrinsic factor antibody.

Pernicious anemia
- Common cause of Cbl deficiency
- Autoimmune attack on gastric intrinsic factor (IF)

Anti-intrinsic factor antibodies
- detectable in serum in up to 50% of pt with PA
- Highly specific but not sensitive (only found in 50% of pt with PA)
- 2 types of anti-IF antibodies
  1. blocks the attachment of Cbl to IF
  2. blocks attachment of Cbl-IF complex to ileal receptors

Serum Vit B12 level
- 3-5 years of stores
- absorbed in ileum
- Other causes of Vit B12 deficiency –
  a. total partial gastrectomy
  b. stagnant loop syndrome
  c. Crohn’s disease or ileal resection
  d. Chronic atrophic gastritis

Homocysteine level
Homocysteine can build up in Vit B12 or folate deficiency but not specific

Serum gastrin
- Not specific

Parietal cell Ab
- Found in > 70% of
- Not specific

IF Ab with fasting serum gastrin – investigation of choice

Answer: E