

Patient safety in Laboratory Medicine

Quality



All of our laboratory disciplines are accredited to the internationally recognized standard ISO 15189 - which specifies the requirements for quality and competence in laboratory medicine. Furthermore we have regular intra- and interdisciplinary audits of our laboratory performance, with the purpose of improving our patient care.

EQA



Participating in External Quality Assessment (EQA) schemes allows for comparison of our laboratories' testing techniques to other laboratories in the UK. This aids standardisation of diagnostic criteria across the country.

Turnaround Times



This is the period of time from receipt of sample in the laboratory, until the report is generated. This will vary from test to test and discipline to discipline.

Furthermore the urgency of the request is taken into account. Urgent A&E samples will be prioritised and have a shorter turnaround time compared to a GP sample.

Confidentiality



All patient information and results are completely confidential and only ever shared with requesting clinicians and staff directly involved in the patient's care. Results are never given to patient's over the phone.

Temperature Monitoring Systems



The laboratory environment, analytical reactions, instrumentation and materials must be monitored and controlled to required temperatures. This includes instruments, incubators, refrigerators-freezers, and specimen holding rooms.

This is to facilitate quality of results and guarantee safety of blood products to be given/transfused to patients.

IQC



Daily Internal Quality Controls (IQCs), which aim to mimic patient samples, are run on every test performed by all laboratories to ensure the accuracy, precision and reliability of the results that we report. This facilitates continuity of patient care over time.

Training



Experienced and qualified members of staff interpret and report laboratory results in a timely fashion.

We also demonstrate good professional practice by continually learning and developing throughout our careers.

Abnormal Results



Every discipline will have clear escalation policies for dealing with and communicating abnormal results through the relevant channels.

Further Investigations



Further laboratory investigations may be performed on the sample provided in order to aid diagnosis, but this is strictly limited to specific cases outlined in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Multidisciplinary teamwork



We are at the heart of multi-disciplinary healthcare as we provide other professionals with vital scientific information, allowing them to make informed clinical decisions, ensure blood stocks are adequate at critical times, measuring chemicals to monitor patient condition, investigating disease by looking at tumour samples and identifying microorganisms in the fight against infection.