

Key factors known to affect test performance and result interpretation

There are several key factors known to affect the performance of tests or the interpretation of results and although some like jaundice cannot be avoided, others like sample volume and exposure to sunlight, can. It is therefore very important that samples are taken in the correct containers and any specific sampling or transporting instructions adhered to.

Some of these key factors are listed below. If any of these are found appropriate comments will be attached to the report and repeat specimens maybe requested.

- Cold Agglutinins/Cryoglobulins
- Delay in testing which can affect tests which are prone to sample lability e.g. serum potassium
- Interfering substances (e.g. heparin, bacteria)
- Jaundice
- Haemolysis
- Lipaemia
- High protein level
- Poor sample taking leading to mechanical haemolysis
- Wrong sample container/wrong anticoagulant
- Temperature extremes
- Sample volume – especially where liquid anticoagulants are used
- Exposure to sunlight

Uncertainty of Measurement

The Laboratory is required to determine uncertainty of measurement for all reportable parameters. Uncertainty of Measurement details are available from the Laboratory on request. However, any UoM details which impact clinically will be communicated directly to users.