

Scotland Audit Group Bulletin

Critical results communication

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Which area did you audit and why?

- Good patient care depends on rapid communication of critical results
- An explicit requirement of ISO15189 is for laboratories to have a system in place for communication of critical results to clinical teams
- We audited urgent communication of critical potassium results (>6.5 mmol/L) and explored differences in practice between Health Boards in September 2015

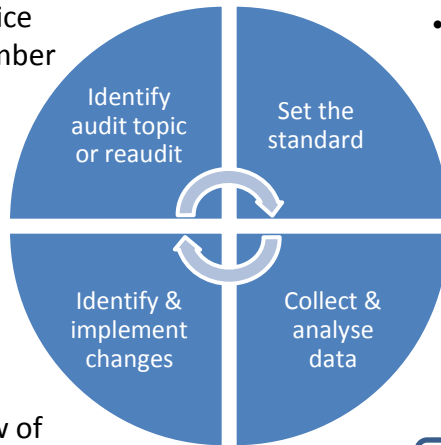


What were the audit standards?

- “The communication of critical and unexpected pathology results”, RCPATH guidelines
- We explored:
 - What % results were communicated to users
 - The reasons behind failure to communicate results
 - How long it took to communicate results depending on time of day or night

What are the next steps for laboratories?

- Two Health Boards require review of results that they have not communicated
- Nearly all laboratories need to change practice to meet the RCPATH KPI regarding logging reasons for a defined critical result not being communicated
- Roche users need to harmonise practice regarding haemolysis levels and potassium reporting



What key things did you learn?

- Most laboratories throughout Scotland who took part meet the standard that 97% of potassium results >6.5 mmol/L should be communicated within 2 hours
- A mixture of staff groups including clerical, BMS, Clinical Scientists and medics can be used to report results without impacting communication of results
- There is no need to communicate results to a GP practice the next working day provided there is a system in place for out-of-hours to communicate with GPs



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