

The objective of this review was to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of laboratory practices/ interventions to develop evidence based recommendations for the best laboratory practices to reduce labeling errors” Sandhu et al (2017).

Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Specimen labeling errors have long plagued the laboratory industry putting patients at risk of transfusion-related death, medication errors, misdiagnosis, and patient mismanagement. Many interventions have been implemented and deemed to be effective in reducing sample error rates. The objective of this review was to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of laboratory practices/ interventions to develop evidence based recommendations for the best laboratory practices to reduce labeling errors.

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CONTENT: The standardized LMBP™ A-6 methods were used to conduct this systematic review. Total evidence included 12 studies published during the time periods of 1980 to September 2015. Combined data from seven studies found that the interventions developed as a result of improved communication and collaboration between the laboratory and clinical staff resulted in substantial decrease in specimen labeling errors (Median relative percent change in labeling errors: -75.86; IQI: -84.77, -58.00). Further data from subset of four studies showed a significant decrease in specimen labeling errors after the institution of the standardized specimen labeling protocols (Median relative percent decrease in specimen labeling errors: -72.45; IQI: -83.25, -46.50).

SUMMARY: Based on the evidence included in this review, the interventions that enhance the communication and collaboration between laboratory and healthcare professionals can decrease the specimen identification errors in healthcare settings. However, more research is needed to make the conclusion on the effectiveness of other evaluated practices in this review including training and education of the specimen collection staff, audit and feedback of labeling errors, and implementation of new technology (other than barcoding).

Reference:

Sandhu, P., Bandyopadhyay, K., Ernst, D.J., Hunt, W., Taylor, T.H. Jr., Birch, R., Krolak, J. and Geaghan, S. (2017) Effectiveness of Laboratory Practices to Reducing Patient Misidentification Due to Specimen Labeling Errors at the Time of Specimen Collection in Healthcare Settings: LMBP™ Systematic Review. *The Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine*. 2(2), p.244-258.

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