MINIMUM RETEST INTERVAL FOR LABORATORY TESTING	**Laboratory** **LAB-060**

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Overview

A high proportion of laboratory testing is either inappropriate or not useful to clinical decision making. Some of this misuse occurs when laboratory tests are reordered without consideration of previous results, change in the patient's condition, or the time required for test values to change with changes in physiology. Defining the minimal-retesting interval (MRI) for a test is an accepted approach to limiting inappropriate laboratory testing.

The MRI defines the time required for a significant change to occur in the test result; and/or identifies the minimal re-testing interval where more frequent testing is unnecessary under the majority of clinical situations. The main goals for limiting the frequency of test re-ordering are to reduce repeated and unnecessary clinical pathology tests, to minimize harm to patients, and to save valuable resources.

A table containing MRI by test (minimum re-test interval guideline) is available on the Eastern Health Intranet and on the Eastern Health Internet website and is updated when required. This policy prevents test requests that breach the MRI threshold from being processed. It is recognized that occasionally clinical needs for individual patients will require repeat testing at frequency greater than the MRI. An over-ride procedure is used to accommodate this.

POLICY

Laboratory test requests that breach the MRI threshold will not be processed.

An over-ride procedure is available to address situations where repeat testing at higher frequency than the MRI is required.

Scope

This policy applies to all health care professionals with test ordering privileges and affects all tests identified in the MRI guideline.

Purpose

This policy provides guidance on the appropriate re-testing interval, and limits unnecessary clinical pathology test reordering, in order to minimize unnecessary laboratory procedures and to save valuable resources.

Procedure(s)

1. Implementation of MRI thresholds
Order frequency by test for individual patients can be tracked within the hospital information system (Meditech). The MRI thresholds are programmed for the identified tests such that when a test order is being placed that violates the MRI, the order entry user will be flagged with a message indicating violation of the MRI and that the test order will not be processed.

2. Override Procedure for an order entry.
A dialog box will appear within the test ordering interface which can over-ride the request, but requires entry of a short statement to justify the override. The laboratory will assume that such requests for over-ride was authorized by the ordering physician. The laboratory will audit this process to ensure responsible use of the system.

3. Override Procedure for tests on paper requisitions.
For paper requisitions presented to data entry personnel the text “over-ride” must be clearly printed next to the test where override of the policy is required. A short statement to justify the over-ride must appear in the “DIAGNOSIS/RELEVANT HISTORY” portion of the requisition or on a completed Laboratory Test Special Authorization form accompanying the requisition. The laboratory will audit this process to ensure responsible use of the system.

4. Override Procedure for cancelled tests.
Tests cancelled by the MRI policy may still be processed if the sample is within the laboratory. In these cases, contact should be made with the laboratory indicating the need for testing and the Laboratory Test Special Authorization Form must be submitted for review by a laboratory professional. Testing will be completed if the sample remains in the laboratory and test stability is confirmed.

Guideline

Minimum re-test interval guideline

Linkages

- Laboratory test special authorization form
- Minimum re-test interval Guideline

Key Words

- reorder, repeat, approval, test approval

Definitions & Acronyms

Minimum re-test interval	The minimum frequency allowed for reordering a previously ordered test.
Laboratory test special authorization form.	Information form for requesting over-ride of minimum re-test policy. This form must be completed as part of the test request approval process to insure timely analysis.
Laboratory Professional	Laboratory Medicine Division Chief, Laboratory Scientist, Pathologist, or Laboratory Physician in the specific laboratory discipline that the test is a recognized responsibility.