

Critical Results: Whose Responsibility?

What is a critical result?

- ▶ A critical result is one that is so extremely abnormal that it represents a life threatening condition for which some corrective actions should be taken promptly
 - Lundberg GD. When to panic over abnormal values. *Med Lab Obs* 1972;4:47–54
- ▶ Critical results and critical tests
 - Campbell CA, Horvath AR. Harmonization of critical result management in laboratory medicine. *Clinica Chimica Acta* 2014;432:135–147

RCPATH FBC cut-offs, 2010

- ▶ Lower cut-off limits:
 - Neutrophils $0.5 \times 10^9/L$
 - Hb 50 – 70 g/L
 - Platelets $50 \times 10^9/L$
- ▶ Upper cut-off limits:
 - Neutrophils $50 \times 10^9/L$
 - Hb 190 g/L
 - Platelets $1000 \times 10^9/L$

The Royal College of Pathologists (UK). Out-of-hours reporting of laboratory results requiring urgent clinical action to primary care: Advice to pathologists and those that work in laboratory medicine. London, UK: RCPATH; 2010.

ISO 15189: 2012

- ▶ Defines the need for a policy for the management of critical results
- ▶ Effective policy requires a list of critical results and tests
- ▶ ICSH 2014
 - International survey on current practice

Defining a critical result

- ▶ What should be considered critical?
 - Uniform alert thresholds for all patients?
 - Who defines critical tests and critical results?
 - What alert thresholds do you use?
- ▶ Should exemptions be allowed?
 - By category of patient
 - By ward/department/clinician
- ▶ Should results be repeated before reporting?
 - If yes, do you repeat 'non-critical' results
 - Does repeating tests just introduce delay

Notifying critical results/tests

- ▶ How quickly should results be notified?
 - ▶ How are results notified?
 - ▶ Who gives/receives results?
 - ▶ How do you confirm receipt?
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- ▶ Is information overload a danger?
 - ▶ What action do you take if you can't reach the responsible clinician or alternative?
 - ▶ How do you balance the use of resources?

Critical results session

- ▶ When critical results reporting goes wrong
 - Dr Kate Ryan
- ▶ A clinician's viewpoint
 - Dr William McKane
- ▶ A laboratory manager's viewpoint
 - Ms Tracey Smith–Straney
- ▶ A medico–legal viewpoint
 - Dr Michael Devlin
- ▶ Discussion