

TAG Fluid Audit 2022 - Recommendations / Standards:

- All laboratories should consider to introduce trust guidelines available for requesting biochemistry tests on fluids to avoid inappropriate requests. All laboratories should liaise with the clinical team and ensure trust clinical guidelines and clinical practice are in line with the laboratories guidelines.
- All laboratories should have protocols in place for both clinical and laboratory staff indicating sample requirement and handling procedures.
- Available fluid tests should be reviewed. The ones which are obsolete or not routinely available within clinical biochemistry should be removed from PAS and from LIMS, so that they are not requestable to avoid confusion to the service user and laboratory staff.
- Laboratories should ensure that appropriate internal quality control (IQC) and external quality assessment (EQA) procedures are in place.
- Laboratories should verify their fluid tests. Otherwise, test results must be reported with a comment stating test not verified and interpret with caution.
- Laboratories should be aware of their test's susceptibility to interference.

For instance:

- for xanthochromia test, strong absorbance of certain contrast dye or antibiotics in the UV range can mask the ability to detect oxyhaemoglobin and bilirubin, leading false negatives. Laboratories should be able to identify these cases and discuss the results with the clinician.
- Fluid samples should be assessed for haemolysis either by visual inspection or HIL index. CSF protein should not be run if grossly haemolysed. Laboratories should consider using HIL indices for fluid testing based on manufacturer's guidelines or verification studies.
- Laboratories should use manufacturer-specific, gender-related reference ranges if available.
- Reporting the appearance of fluids pre and post centrifugation is not mandatory, since there are no systematic studies to support its utility.
- All laboratories should take actions to ensure fluid tests are only requested when clinical indicated and provide interpretation for the results where if possible.
- All laboratories should align with the current best laboratory practices for fluid testing (a summary of the best laboratory practices is available to be downloaded)