

American Data Network Patient Safety Organization Specimen Focused Study



Why Specimens?

Laboratory testing provides essential information used by providers in medical decision making with an estimated 60-70% of these decisions based on laboratory test results. Patient safety events involving specimens can be precursors to serious mistakes, including diagnostic errors and inappropriate treatments. While mix-ups and mishaps do happen in laboratories, literature suggests that the majority of specimen events actually occur outside the lab. In fact, errors occurring in the Pre-analytical Phase of testing, like mislabeling and inaccurate patient identification, account for 68.2% of all specimen events. Studies also find that events occurring in the Post-analytical Phase are more likely to result in patient harm, like when critical results are not reported in a timely manner.

The Financial Impact

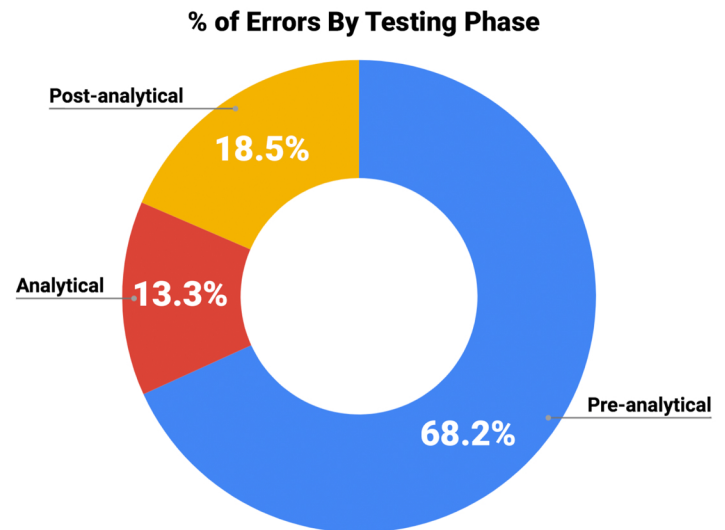
Specimen errors can be expensive, too. Researchers at Loyola University Health System calculated the average cost of a labeling error to be \$712 per redraw, not including inestimable damages of patient anxiety, discomfort and delays in diagnosis or treatments. Consider a hospital with an annual specimen labeling defect rate of 0.02% per million tests. This would result in 2,000 patients requiring redraws and cost the hospital over \$1.4 million.

The Preventability

The good news is that specimen errors are believed to be highly preventable, and effective interventions based on strong policies, clear feedback, and relevant education do not need to be resource intensive. After analyzing nearly 3,000 specimen events collected over four years, ADNPSO noted that 77% of specimen incidents either almost certainly or likely could have been prevented.

The Study

ADNPSO is launching its Specimen Focused Study in order to positively impact Patient Care, Satisfaction, Quality/Safety and Finance. The study is designed to help healthcare professionals, both inside and outside the laboratory, better understand why specimen events happen and how they can collaborate to decrease errors across the testing process.



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Get In Touch

For more information about the Specimen Focused Study or other ADNPSO initiatives, please contact **Phyllis Ragland** at pragland@americandatanetwork.com.