

5. Define “resolution” with regard to rectifying lab errors,
A) A quick fix,
B) Making sure THAT error does not happen again

How do we TRY to prevent errors?

We try to prevent errors in a whole variety of ways, as shown in Table 1. As you should know, QC is simply one part of an entire range of measures we use to prevent errors from leaving the lab. Let’s look at the steps shown in this table, one by one.

Table 1: Ways in which we try to prevent errors reaching patient files

- Appropriate instruments, methods
- Training
- Documentation, SOPs
- Training
- Supervision
- Training
- Monitoring and QC
- Training
- More training.....

Appropriate instruments and methods

By selecting the most appropriate instrument for the function, we are beginning the quest to reduce errors. The selection process may be easy, if there are few choices and little spare cash, but there will still be the need to make sure the machine will do what you want, i.e. it is fit for its purpose. The statistics involved in selecting and evaluating an instrument will be discussed in a later module.

Documentation, SOPs

The point in writing documents, those dreaded SOPs, is quite simple. It is an attempt to make your laboratory system, the way in which you tackle things, systematic. The theory is that documents make everyone do the job one way, the correct way. This module is not an introduction to accreditation, so we will not say much more on this subject, except to point out that if an SOP is well written and clear to all those who might read it – regardless of which one of eleven is their home language – then it should also be good enough to be used for training people to do the function it describes. So, keep those SOPs on the bench and use them regularly.