

Research project IZS VE 09/12

Turnaround time (TAT) monitoring: putting at the centre customers' satisfaction

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Turnaround time (TAT) has long been established as a key factor in customers' satisfaction and it is often used as indicator of laboratory performance. TAT has been defined in various ways by researchers. The "total testing cycle" describes TAT as a consortium of nine steps: ordering, collection, identification, transport, preparation, analysis, reporting, interpretation, and action. Besides, TAT can be classified as pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical depending on the different phases of sample processing (Truchaud et al., 1997).

Test results exceeding by >3 SD the internally defined mean turnaround time can be comprised among laboratory mistakes and is well known the distribution of the errors among the pre-analytical (68.2%), analytical (13.3%) and post-analytical (18.5%) (Plebani et al., 1997). Our research aims to evaluate TAT in IZSve laboratories and to estimate the contribution of the different analytical phases to optimize laboratory workflow and to reduce pre-analytical mistakes. Improvement of turnaround times is essential for laboratory quality management.