Primary Care Laboratories Interface Group (PLIG)

23rd January 2020

Dear Colleague

Issues with highlighting abnormal biochemistry results

We have been made aware that some practices are workflowing laboratory results so that in general only results that are highlighted in bold on the lab report are being forwarded on to GPs.

There are some risks to practices adopting this approach and we have done our best to summarise these in the table below so that practices can decide on whether they wish to continue with this approach/adapt their procedures.

It is also important that whoever is reviewing these results is aware of the occasions where the end column of a cumulative report may not be the only new result – see previous PLIG communication for further information -
https://www.edinburghlabmed.co.uk/PLIG/Announcements/Documents/Cumulative%20report%20changes.pdf

There may be other issues which we are not aware of so the table below is not necessarily an exhaustive list of all the potential pitfalls.

Best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

SJenks

Dr Sara Jenks

PLIG Chair

Consutant in Chemical Pathology/Metabolic Medicine

Clinical Biochemistry, RIE

Group	Examples*
Biochemistry Results reported outwith the main cumulative report†	Serum protein electrophoresis Urine bence jones protein Coeliac serology Faecal calprotectin
Borderline results – It is not possible for our current lab IT system to highlight borderline results that are within the reference range	B12 180-200 Vit D 25-50 Borderline testosterones Borderline faecal calprotectins Borderline ferritins
Tests without a reference range where levels fluctuate due to diurnal variation, menstrual cycle etc.	Progesterone Cortisol
Results that are inappropriately normal	Parathyroid hormone – a normal parathyroid hormone is abnormal if Ca is high
Results that are answered with text	Insufficient Haemolysed Old samples Drugs of abuse Malarial parasites

*Please note examples stated may not be an exhaustive list

†Labs IT are working on a solution to this issue. We hope to have a fix in place to address these issues in early 2020.