

Introduction to Laboratory Informatics: Life of a Specimen

Data Quality

Laboratories play a crucial role in fighting diseases, helping medical care, and supporting public health. Accurate diagnoses of diseases and protection from health threats depend on a laboratory's ability to produce quality data. There are many areas in the life of a specimen workflow where data quality can be compromised. Some include data collection, data entry, data processing, data analysis, and data storage. The quality of data impacts every decision made along the patient care and public health continuum. This ranges from medical treatment of individual patients to local, regional, and national public health surveillance and outbreak response. Accurate and reliable data is the sole driver in laboratory informatics. Take a moment to examine the key questions to consider about quality in each area.