

Journal of Andrology, Vol 13, Issue 5 349-360, Copyright © 1992 by The American Society of Andrology

## REVIEW

# The andrology laboratory in an Assisted Reproductive Technologies program. Quality assurance and laboratory methodology

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Assuring the highest possible quality of care to the patient is the first goal of the andrology laboratory. Quality control and quality assurance as they apply to the andrology laboratory are outlined, and special problems in quality control for sperm function assays are addressed. An example of the patient review process is presented. Quality of care also depends on the ability of the laboratory to perform appropriate tests of sperm function that can diagnose sperm defects, predict success or failure of in vitro fertilization, and lead to rational therapies for sperm dysfunctions. Methods for, and diagnostic value of, sperm swim-out, enhanced sperm penetration assays, acrosome reaction assessment, motility analysis of capacitating sperm, and sperm-zona binding assays are reviewed. No single test, other than in vitro fertilization itself, is capable of providing a complete diagnosis or a highly accurate prediction. A battery of sperm function tests, arranged in an algorithm, is presented as a theoretically better approach.

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