

## Quality and Risk Management in the IVF Laboratory

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This is a clearly written introduction to quality and risk management with a specific angle towards the issues faced by IVF laboratories, from authors with many years of experience in the specialty. They have succeeded in producing an account that is not only highly readable but also authoritative and well referenced.

The book introduces and explains the concept of the total quality management system (QMS). The point is well made that this is not merely a requirement of regulatory bodies, but that it brings clear benefits to working practice and service delivery as shown in many areas of industry and medical practice.

The authors describe practical aspects of implementation: troubleshooting, benchmarking, validation and process mapping are all outlined using examples from IVF laboratories. Sections are clearly laid out with flow charts and diagrams to aid explanation. There is a good introduction to some basic QA tools such as root cause analysis. The authors are not prescriptive in their approach and rightly encourage readers to develop their own QMS, tailored to the needs of their own laboratory.

Although published in the USA, the book makes reference to international guidelines and consequently is relevant to the European market. In addition, there is some referencing to the UK scene and to HFEA regulations in particular.

The book is rather weaker when it comes to discussion of IVF laboratory systems, as there is a tendency to promote particular systems (e.g. stage-specific media for embryo culture), but there is not enough space to discuss the merits of these fully. It is a pity that the introduction to the book and the publicity material place much emphasis on

avoiding high profile IVF mistakes which, although headline catching, may be a misleading indicator of overall quality. We would like to see more emphasis throughout the book on the overall improvement in performance in IVF units, including, not just treatment success rates (which are covered well), but safety issues.

The authors have missed opportunities to stress safety, e.g. the value of monitoring estradiol levels to prevent ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome. A puzzling omission in this respect is that multiple pregnancy receives barely a mention throughout the book, yet many in the IVF field will feel that this is one of *the* major quality issues. It is also a shame that the remit of the book is specific to the IVF laboratory, although most are contained within a multidisciplinary unit. When clinical, nursing, admin, counselling and laboratory services are working closely together, as is the case for most IVF units, good communication is a key part of an effective quality system. Guidance on facilitating this would make a welcome additional chapter in subsequent editions.

Taken as a stand-alone guide to the IVF laboratory, this book will be very useful to units embarking on developing a QMS and very worthwhile reading for every member of the team.

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