

Perceptions of Collaboration With a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science

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ABSTRACT

Every person in America seeks medical care at some point, relying on highly educated health care professionals to solve their medical affliction. Many clinicians rely on laboratory testing to provide insight to a patient's illness. Unfortunately, the appropriate laboratory tests are not always ordered correctly during a patient's initial visit. A study that examined 15 years' worth of inappropriate test utilization indicated that, on average, 20.6% of laboratory tests were ordered when they were not needed, and 44.8% of laboratory tests that were needed were not ordered. This is considered a medical error that can lead to financial waste, psychological distress, delayed diagnosis, or even death. Evidence is accumulating that clinicians are struggling with selecting and interpreting complex laboratory tests. The introduction of

an advanced-practice medical laboratory professional, a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS), is now available to provide consultation to clinicians and assist them with challenges in laboratory medicine. This qualitative research project explored the perceptions that clinicians have about medical laboratory professionals and how those perceptions change after collaboration with a DCLS. These findings provide insight for an unexplored area of health care research and support the need for future study into the efficacy of including laboratory expertise in patient care.

ABBREVIATIONS: DCLS - Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science.

Clin Lab Sci 2021;34(4):29

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