6.4. Point of Care Testing

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Point-of-care testing (POCT) refers to diagnostic testing that is performed outside of the central laboratory, near to the patient, often at the patient bedside. This testing is typically performed by clinical staff, such as nurses or physicians, who are not laboratory trained and have multiple demands on their time. Clinical staff do not always appreciate the importance of quality assurance (QA) activities for POCT, required to ensure safe and reliable results. Hospital-based POCT is generally overseen by the laboratory and the laboratory holds responsibility for ensuring QA practices are in-place and adhered to. Audits for compliance of POCT users with policies and procedures related to QA are a key component to laboratory oversight of POCT programs. These audits are used to identify areas for quality improvement. Here, audit and follow-up data from quality improvement initiatives for the POCT program at The Ottawa Hospital are discussed.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define Point of Care Testing (POCT).
2. List three examples of POCT.
3. List challenges to quality of POCT.