

Recent Article on Laboratory Acquired Infections

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The incidence of laboratory-acquired infections (LAI) is not known because no federal guidelines exist for reporting. Baron and Miller attempted to shed some light on this subject in a recently published article in *Diagnostic Microbiology and Infectious Diseases* [1]. This article highlights many areas that are important for the clinical laboratorian to consider as a means to protect against LAI. These include safety practices, the proper use of biosafety cabinets, review of the latest edition of the *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories Manual* [2], and understanding the capabilities and limitations of automated identification instrumentation.

Additionally, the article outlined other important recommendations that benefit microbiology laboratories. These recommendations included:

- ◆ Adequate job specific training
- ◆ The ability to recognize growth characteristics of special pathogens
- ◆ Proper immunization of laboratory employees
- ◆ Facility design and work flow that limits possible exposure
- ◆ Proper use of personal protective equipment
- ◆ Limitations/cautions of using automated instrumentation for special pathogen identification

We will continue to emphasize these during various training events throughout the state including our special pathogens wet workshops. Further questions concerning the work place and safety practices and/or for a copy of the Baron and Miller article, contact Josh Rowland at jrowland@unmc.edu.

References

1. Baron, E. J., & Miller, J. M. 2007. Bacterial and fungal infections among diagnostic laboratory workers: evaluating the risks. *Diagnostic Microbiology and Infectious Diseases*. epub.
2. The 5th Edition of the BMBL can be accessed via the NPHL website at www.nphl.org/news.html#BMBL.