

Improving Lab Efficiency with the PathFinder 350S

The PathFinder 350S Sorter is a bench-top unit, small enough to fit anywhere it is needed for sample sorting in a laboratory; from specimen reception, to analytical process lines; to storage areas.

When installed in the busy Haematology Department of Clinipath Pathology, the PathFinder 350S has helped them process blood samples in a number of ways.

Sonic Healthcare's Clinipath Pathology in Perth, Western Australia, has been using the PathFinder 350S since August 2010, and found very positive results. Mr Jeff Bennett, Haematology Department Manager, claims, "overall the machine works a double shift, it works efficiently, it doesn't get tired, and so eliminates human error".

Their laboratory is processing between 1,000 and 1,500 EDTA samples per day, and each sample might pass through the PathFinder unit anywhere from one to four times. Prior to this, they were using their LIS storage module, with a largely manual procedure.

The main error that has been eliminated at Clinipath Pathology is misplaced specimens. It can consume a lot of time for a laboratory assistant to chase the whereabouts of these specimens. At times, the blood may have to be re-collected.

But now, the lab assistant has the confidence that no tests on a specimen will be missed. They can access the PathFinder 350S to retrieve the location of a specimen tube at the touch of a button.



Other manual tasks have also been reduced. Rather than a person waving a wand over the barcode to manually determine any outstanding tests and then placing the tube into the correct rack or storage, the PathFinder 350S automatically sorts samples into the right rack and when finished, archives them into a storage rack.

Labour Saving

At Clinipath Pathology, Mr Bennett estimates that the unit has saved 0.6 of a full-time equivalent; or around 22 hours' work per week. This has enabled the Department to save on wages and keep their main laboratory assistants on higher-level, more rewarding tasks.

Mr Bennett has found that overall the PathFinder 350S has been very reliable. He says, "It was a pleasant surprise to have virtually no downtime since the installation". And since it has many applications, he has become a great fan.

If you're interested in how a PathFinder bench-top unit can assist your laboratory with sorting, in an inexpensive and flexible way, please contact Aim Lab.

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