



WITNESSING THE SURE WAY TO BE SAFE

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Medical technologies have advanced dramatically in recent years, transforming diagnosis, treatment and patient care. It presents numerous opportunities for improving and transforming health care, and one very important aspect is REDUCING HUMAN Errors. Human error can happen to even the most experienced and well-trained person. Having the right protocols in place and following them should minimize instances of human error.

With increasing workload, the stress and challenges on embryologists increase, and with increasing demands, the limited availability of resources further elevates the risk of errors. The other main stress inducers are high workload and time pressure, fear of making mistakes and accepting low success rates. In an ivf lab even one or two IVF lab mix-ups is one too many. The undesirable effects of a sample mismatch can be catastrophic for both patients and health care professionals. In the early days of IVF, MANUAL DOUBLE WITNESSING was used to reduce the misidentification of gametes for insemination. However, risk for human errors due to fatigue, automatism, and distraction or workload makes this a mistake-prone approach. Despite using verbal checks to ensure patients' safety, mistakes do creep in.

This is where electronic witnessing proves an essential tool in an ART lab. It minimizes stress on embryologists by helping them monitor the sequence, timing, and completion of procedures, eliminates the risk of sample mismatch, minimizes interruptions, improves sample management and traceability and eliminates the need for a second human witness. The two electronic witnessing methods are the Barcode and RFID methods; both are effective. Barcode is based on a laser or image-based sensor in a scanner, which reads the pattern of bars and spaces. RFID is a wireless technology that uses radio waves to identify and track tags attached to objects.

Most patients have significant concerns about a biological sample mix-up, but only when made aware about it as a possibility during their treatment.

The EWS is an instrument capable of reducing stress and represents a protective tool beneficial for the patient's well-being, especially for those patients who are more prone to developing emotional distress.

Take-home message:

- Many patients appreciate the use of EWS, and enhanced patient satisfaction was noted.
- It indeed is an ideal tool to provide solace and assurance to the otherwise financially, physically and emotionally stressed out infertile couple.
- Eliminates the disadvantages of manual witnessing.
- Enhances the confidence and peace of mind for embryologists at the end of a workday.
- Optimal safety, security and reliability.