

Notification of abnormal lab test results in an electronic medical record: do any safety concerns remain?

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<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/notification-abnormal-lab-test-results-electronic-medical-record-do-any-safety-concerns>

Unreliable [test result management systems](#) are a common problem in [ambulatory care](#), and failure (or inability) to promptly follow up abnormal test results may lead to [diagnostic errors](#) and other safety problems. Automated alerts within electronic health records should minimize such problems. However, this study conducted in Veterans Affairs clinics found that 1 in 10 alerts for abnormal laboratory test results went unread by providers, and a large proportion of those patients did not receive timely clinical follow-up. The investigators found similar results when analyzing follow-up of alerts for [abnormal imaging results](#). "[Alert fatigue](#)" is one possible explanation for these findings.