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## Background

**Are you gaining the maximum value from your electronic investigation result downloads? Do you want your investigation result downloads to populate your clinical records?** If so, then it is time to review and possibly changed the format that your results are downloaded in.

There are two technical formats used for results: PIT (Pathology Information Transfer); and HL7 (Health Level Seven). PIT format has been the default format utilised by various service providers of health information. PIT format provides clinical information largely in an "image" format with the contents unrecognisable as data elements for linkage to specific clinical note data elements. Considerable effort within the health informatics arena has seen the development and implementation of HL7 pathology standards for electronic transfer of clinical information.

## Benefits of HL7 Investigation Result Downloads

The following provides examples of some of the benefits of using HL7 investigation result downloads:

- Graphic displays of pathology data. Useful to show patients during the consultation to motivate for change.
- Auto-population of diabetes assessment with pathology readings rather than having to re-key data.
- Potential (real in some GP settings) to send and receive referrals in HL7 format.
- Potential to have alerting based on values (e.g. those patients with a HBA1C >7.0mmol), and do other clever stuff with the data, rather than just having a graphic/text file to look at.
- Ability to conduct database searches based on data values incorporated in the health record through HL7 downloads.

## Am I receiving pathology information via HL7 download?

A recent survey of SEA-GP (Brisbane) found that the vast majority of members are utilising either Medical Director or IBA Health software solutions in their practice, therefore please follow the guidance outlined below for these vendor products. If your practice utilises an alternative product please contact your vendor support services for guidance.

### Medical Director

Within a patient's record in Medical Director, go to the **Results** tab then click the **Cumulative Results** button. This will list all the pathology entities (e.g. HDL, Uric acid, trigs) then click the **Graph** button. You will be able to graph any of these values if the data is being received using HL7 format.

### IBA Health (Classic, Plexus and practiX)

IBA Health have advised SEA-GP (Brisbane) that all their products (Classic, Plexus and practiX) support HL7 downloads and recommend their clients call their pathology service providers to confirm if they are receiving HL7 downloads.

## What do I do to change to HL7 downloads?

There are a couple of simple steps to make the change to HL7 downloads. The following points are provided as a guide:

- **Does your software product support HL7 investigation result downloads?**  
Most clinical software solutions do support HL7 investigation results but due to variations and changes in products you are advised to contact your software vendor and/or IT support provider to ask this question. Also ask them what enhancements will be available in their software product if you were to change to HL7 investigation result downloads.
- **Are your pathology and radiology service providers able to provide HL7 investigation result downloads?**  
A list, contact details and status of HL7 download availability of the major pathology and radiology service providers servicing the SEA-GP (Brisbane) region can be accessed on the [Alliance website](#). Contact **all** your pathology and radiology service providers to confirm if they provide the facility for HL7 formatted investigation result downloads and if so request that your practice receive HL7 downloads.

## How does this support my practice's CQI processes?

As a part of your focus on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) within your practice, utilising HL7 downloads will enable you to look at your patient data in a more detailed way and allow effective evaluation of patient care through the use of atomic data elements.

The following RACGP 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Criterion/Indicator would be an appropriate area to apply this CQI:

- **Criterion 3.1.1** - Quality improvement activities - Our practice supports quality improvement activities. **Indicator A.** Our GP(s) and staff can describe an aspect(s) of our practice we have improved in the past 3 years (interview).

## Additional Resources & Information

- IMIT:06-2 Medical Director Version 2 – Diabetes Pathology Results
- IMIT:06-3 Medical Director Version 2 – Cumulative Results Window
- IMIT:06-4 Medical Director Version 2 – Processing of Status and Discharge Summaries
- [www.seagp.org.au](http://www.seagp.org.au) – Programs > IM/IT > On-line Business > List of Providers Capable of Secure Electronic Communications.