



8 LIST OF FACTORS KNOWN TO AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EXAMINATION AND ON INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

There are a number of factors known to affect the performance of the examination and interpretation of results. This list is not exhaustive:

- Failure to follow the sample acceptance policy may result in a delay in producing a report.
- Failure to supply relevant clinical information may result in a delay in producing a report.
- Failure to mark as Urgent may result in a delay in producing a report.
- Specimens placed in the incorrect fixative solution could seriously damage the specimen and render it non-diagnostic.
- Failure to follow sample taking instructions.
- Use of lubricant, bloody samples.

8.1 Measurement Uncertainty in Cervical Screening

Measurement uncertainty can come from the measuring instrument, from the item being measured, from the environment, from the operator, and from other sources. Measurement uncertainties can be estimated using statistical analysis of a set of measurements. The use of good practice such as traceable calibration, careful calculation, good record keeping, and checking can reduce measurement uncertainties. Uncertainty of measurement values have been determined for the HPV test and are available on request.

- In cervical cytology the examination of the sample is used to indicate the presence or absence of disease. Where biological variation in samples occurs, this can lead to difficulties in interpreting results. Where there is genuine doubt as to whether cells changes are abnormal an equivocal report 'Borderline changes' is issued.
- Within the NHSCSP the sensitivity and specificity of the test is well understood and documented. All laboratories and screening individuals are monitored and expected to achieve sensitivities in excess of 90% for all abnormalities and more than 95 % for high grade abnormalities.