

IN RE NAMES ON LABELS FOR WASSERMANN SLIPS.

SPECIMENS FROM PRIVATE PHYSICIANS.

Cases from private physicians have been labeled according to case number and laboratory number during the past week, 20 specimens were examined and the difficulties encountered are increasing. The proper identification of the specimens in the Laboratory is so burdensome that with the present rate of increase it will be impossible to carry on the work with the present Laboratory force. A further difficulty has arisen in the case of private physicians who send their patients to the Laboratory to be bled. A duplicate of the report sent out November 10th will clearly indicate how difficult it is for a physician to identify his own cases by the report submitted, with only two identifying factors, one of which he does not determine.

SPECIMENS FROM INSTITUTIONS.

In the case of institutions it is impossible to do accurate work without at least two separate identifying factors. This result may be obtained by continuing the same method of labeling, which gives the full name of the patient, or it may be obtained by giving the hospital number and the surname of the patient. This recommendation is made on the following grounds.

1. The number of specimens submitted from a single institution at one time ranges from five to forty or more.
2. Those physicians actually obtaining specimens in the hospitals refer to the patients by name, the hospital record which gives the case number often being in some other part of the institution.
3. In reporting Wassermann tests by hospital numbers the margin of error is 5% or greater, as shown by the investigation of the records of a well-known, highly efficient private institution. The name was the only absolute identifying factor.

4. Previous experience in this Laboratory shows that the most prolific and disturbing source of error is in failing to absolutely identify each specimen through the successive stages, from the time of obtaining the blood until the final reading is made.

In defense of the present method of labeling (patient's full name) the following may be said: (1) that each institution has upon its records all of the information which this Laboratory requests (2) that these hospital records being clinical as well as laboratory, would naturally be the ones used in medico-legal cases, and (3) that it gives the least source of error in the absolute identification of the individual specimen in each of the necessary laboratory procedures.

File these -
List of 500 &
application for 1000
from the institution &
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