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C46-A2

Blood Gas and pH Analysis and Related Measurements; Approved Guideline— Second Edition

This document provides clear definitions of the quantities in current use, and provides a single source of information on appropriate specimen collection, preanalytical variables, calibration, and quality control for blood pH and gas analysis and related measurements.

A guideline for global application developed through the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute consensus process.

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Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute
950 West Valley Road, Suite 2500
Wayne, PA 19087 USA
P: +1.610.688.0100
F: +1.610.688.0700
www.clsi.org
standard@cls.org

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Blood Gas and pH Analysis and Related Measurements; Approved Guideline—Second Edition

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Paul D'Orazio, PhD
Sharon S. Ehrmeyer, PhD
Ellis Jacobs, PhD, DABCC, FACB

John G. Toffaletti, PhD
Jesper H. Wandrup, DrMed, Cand Scient

Abstract

This guideline is a consolidation of six CLSI documents and projects. The Area Committee on Clinical Chemistry and Toxicology concluded that CLSI's constituencies (professions, government, and industry) would be better served with the production of a single document that retains the essential information from the six original documents, while making it even more relevant and useful. It addresses blood gas, pH, and related measurements (eg, hemoglobin and hemoglobin fractions, oxygen content, hemoglobin-oxygen saturation, electrolytes, and selected metabolites) as measured in blood. It defines terminology and discusses performance characteristics as well as preanalytical variables and analytical considerations. It also addresses quality control issues.

This guideline consolidates and updates previously published CLSI/NCCLS documents C12-A—*Definitions of Quantities and Conventions Related to Blood pH and Gas Analysis; Approved Standard*; C21-A—*Performance Characteristics for Devices Measuring pO_2 and pCO_2 in Blood Samples; Approved Standard*; C25-A—*Fractional Oxyhemoglobin, Oxygen Content and Saturation, and Related Quantities in Blood: Terminology, Measurement, and Reporting; Approved Guideline*; C27-A—*Blood Gas Preanalytical Considerations: Specimen Collection and Controls; Approved Guideline*; and C32-P—*Considerations in the Simultaneous Measurement of Blood Gases, Electrolytes, and Related Analytes in Whole Blood; Proposed Guideline*; and unpublished CLSI document C33—*Practical Blood Gas and pH Quality Control*.

Sections of another CLSI document H11 also are included; however, H11 will remain a separate document, because its content is of interest to a broader audience.

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Committee Membership

Area Committee on Clinical Chemistry and Toxicology

David A. Armbruster, PhD,
DABCC, FACB
Chairholder
Abbott Diagnostics
Abbott Park, Illinois

Christopher M. Lehman, MD
Vice-Chairholder
Univ. of Utah Health Sciences
Center
Salt Lake City, Utah

John Rex Astles, PhD, FACB
 Centers for Disease Control and
 Prevention
 Atlanta, Georgia

David M. Bunk, PhD
 National Institute of Standards and
 Technology
 Gaithersburg, Maryland

David G. Grenache, PhD,
 MT(ASCP), DABCC
 University of Utah, ARUP
 Laboratories
 Salt Lake City, Utah

Steven C. Kazmierczak, PhD,
 DABCC, FACB
 Oregon Health and Sciences
 University
 Portland, Oregon

Linda Thienpont, PhD
 University of Ghent
 Ghent, Belgium

Jeffrey E. Vaks, PhD
 Roche Molecular Diagnostics
 Pleasanton, California

Hubert Vesper, PhD
 Centers for Disease Control and
 Prevention
 Atlanta, Georgia

Jack Zakowski, PhD, FACB
 Beckman Coulter, Inc.
 Brea, California

Advisors

Mary F. Burritt, PhD
 Mayo Clinic
 Scottsdale, Arizona

Paul D'Orazio, PhD
 Instrumentation Laboratory
 Lexington, Massachusetts

Carl C. Garber, PhD, FACB
 Quest Diagnostics, Incorporated
 Lyndhurst, New Jersey

Uttam Garg, PhD, DABCC
 Children's Mercy Hospital and
 Clinic
 Kansas City, Missouri

Neil Greenberg, PhD
 Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics, Inc.
 Rochester, New York

Harvey W. Kaufman, MD
 Quest Diagnostics, Incorporated
 Lyndhurst, New Jersey

W. Gregory Miller, PhD
 Virginia Commonwealth University
 Richmond, Virginia

Gary L. Myers, PhD
 Centers for Disease Control and
 Prevention
 Atlanta, Georgia

David Sacks, MD
 Brigham and Women's Hospital
 and Harvard Medical School
 Boston, Massachusetts

Bette Seamonds, PhD
 Mercy Health Laboratory
 Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Dietmar Stöckl, PhD
 STT Consulting
 Horebeke, Belgium

Thomas L. Williams, MD
 Nebraska Methodist Hospital
 Omaha, Nebraska

Working Group on pH and Blood Gas Analysis and Related Measurements

Paul D'Orazio, PhD
Chairholder
Instrumentation Laboratory
Lexington, Massachusetts

Sharon S. Ehrmeyer, PhD
 Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
 Madison, Wisconsin

Ellis Jacobs, PhD, DABCC, FACB
 NY City Health & Hospital Corporation
 New York, New York

John G. Toffaletti, PhD
 Duke University Medical Center
 Durham, North Carolina

Jesper H. Wandrup, DrMed,
 Cand Scient
 Radiometer Medical A/S
 Bronshøj, Denmark

Advisors

Susan Blonshine, RRT, RPFT, FAARC
 TechEd Consultants, Inc.
 Mason, Michigan

Carl D. Mottram, BA, RRT, RPFT,
 FAARC
 Mayo Clinic
 Rochester, Minnesota

Staff

Clinical and Laboratory Standards
 Institute
 Wayne, Pennsylvania

Lois M. Schmidt, DA
*Vice President, Standards Development
 and Marketing*

Jane M. Oates, MT(ASCP)
Staff Liaison

Melissa A. Lewis
Editor

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Catherine Foss
Duke University Medical Center

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Foreword

The previous edition of this document, C46-A, was the result of the decision of the Area Committee on Clinical Chemistry and Toxicology to combine and update four approved-level documents, one proposed-level document, and one unpublished document. The intent was for this document to serve more effectively the three major constituents (professions, government, and industry) of CLSI.

C46-A consolidated the following documents:

- C12-A—*Definitions of Quantities and Conventions Related to Blood pH and Gas Analysis; Approved Standard;*
- C21-A—*Performance Characteristics for Devices Measuring pO₂ and pCO₂ in Blood Samples; Approved Standard;*
- C25-A—*Fractional Oxyhemoglobin, Oxygen Content and Saturation, and Related Quantities in Blood: Terminology, Measurement, and Reporting; Approved Guideline;*
- C27-A—*Blood Gas Preanalytical Considerations: Specimen Collection and Controls; Approved Guideline;*
- C32-P—*Considerations in the Simultaneous Measurement of Blood Gases, Electrolytes, and Related Analytes in Whole Blood; Proposed Guideline;* and
- C33—*Practical Blood Gas and pH Quality Control* (unpublished).

Sections of CLSI/NCCLS document H11¹ were also included; however, H11¹ remained a separate document, because its content includes greater detail and is of interest to a broader audience.

The current revision of the document, C46-A2, includes the following updates:

- Section 5, *Preanalytical Considerations*, was expanded to include a discussion specific to transport of specimens (see Section 5.3). Section 5.4, *In Vivo Effects on Measurements*, replaces the former section, *Patient Condition*, and was expanded.
- Section 6, *Analytical Interferences*, was expanded significantly, including references to recent literature.
- Section 7, *Blood Gas Analyzer Calibration*, was expanded significantly, including current requirements for calibration traceability.
- Section 8, *Blood Gas Quality Control*, includes newer approaches for “alternative” quality control.
- Appendix B, *Recommendations for Measurement and Reporting of Hemoglobin Fractions and Related Quantities*, was added.
- Appendix C, *Measurement Technologies Used in Instruments for Analysis of Blood Gases, pH, and Related Analytes*, was added.

Key Words

Electrolytes, fractional hemoglobins, hemoglobin-oxygen saturation, metabolites, oxygen content, partial pressure of carbon dioxide, partial pressure of oxygen, pH

Blood Gas and pH Analysis and Related Measurements; Approved Guideline—Second Edition

1 Scope

This guideline addresses blood gas, pH, and related measurements (eg, hemoglobin and hemoglobin fractions, oxygen content, hemoglobin-oxygen saturation, electrolytes, hematocrit, glucose, and lactate) as measured in blood. The guideline is limited to devices for measurement of these quantities *in vitro*. Devices for *in vivo* monitoring and patient-attached, *ex vivo* monitors for blood gas, pH, and related measurements, although common in many respects to devices for *in vitro* measurements, are not specifically addressed.

This document defines terminology and discusses performance characteristics as well as preanalytical variables, analytical considerations, and quality control (QC) issues.

This guideline is primarily intended for laboratory technologists, respiratory therapists, critical care practitioners, and others responsible for obtaining and analyzing blood for pH, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and related measurements. It will also be useful to manufacturers and those responsible for teaching this subject to medical students, residents, and allied health personnel.

2 Introduction

Several aspects of blood pH and gas analysis are unique among clinical laboratory determinations, and, at the same time, no other test results have more immediate impact on patient care. This area of laboratory medicine also has the reputation of being somewhat confusing, partly because of the many different measured and derived quantities that have been used over the years. This document provides clear definitions of the several quantities in current use and includes information on appropriate specimen collection, preanalytical variables, and QC. There is also a section containing a list of performance characteristics pertinent to blood gas analyzers, which can be used by manufacturers to provide operational specifications in a uniform way to facilitate comparison by potential customers of different instruments.

3 Standard Precautions

Because it is often impossible to know what isolates or specimens might be infectious, all patient and laboratory specimens are treated as infectious and handled according to “standard precautions.” Standard precautions are guidelines that combine the major features of “universal precautions and body substance isolation” practices. Standard precautions cover the transmission of all infectious agents and thus are more comprehensive than universal precautions, which are intended to apply only to transmission of blood-borne pathogens. Standard and universal precaution guidelines are available from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.² For specific precautions for preventing the laboratory transmission of all infectious agents from laboratory instruments and materials and for recommendations for the management of exposure to all infectious disease, refer to CLSI document M29.³

4 Terminology

4.1 Concepts and Definitions

This section contains terms and definitions in standard CLSI format integrated with related information and concepts. The formal definitions are accompanied by supplementary information necessary to