

QUALITY ISSUES IN SPIROMETRY / NEW ERS+ATS GUIDELINES

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Spirometry is the most commonly performed pulmonary function test, but poorly trained technologists provide suboptimal breathing maneuvers which cause measurement errors. Guidelines have been published in attempts to improve this situation. The new 2005 ERS+ATS guidelines provide tighter FEV₁ and FVC repeatability goal when compared to the 1993 ERS and 1995 ATS guidelines, and a new abnormality threshold. However, I doubt that the new guidelines will improve the overall quality of testing done. Innovative distance-based learning programs and performance-based certification for all who perform spirometry are needed to improve quality and thereby minimize misclassification rates.