

POSITIVE BLOOD CULTURES

Interpretation of positive cultures requires knowledge of;

- Typical pathogens & contaminants
- Patient's PMHX
 - plus their immune status
- HPIx
- Condition at time of blood draw

Strep viridans & coag-negative staph are commonly reported on blood cultures and may represent contaminant rather than pathogen.

Positive blood cultures occur in <10% of cases.

Factors favouring true positive cultures include;

- Organism growth in < 24 hours.
- Temperature >38.5°C or <36°C
- Current shaking chills
- Immunocompromise
- WCC > 12 (or < 2)
- Gram *negative* rods on culture.

Subsequent culture will help determine true vs false positive.

Reevaluation in the ED may be required. Contact must be made with the patient.

- Low threshold to bring patient back for reassessment and further investigation.