

CHAPTER 7

MEDICAL LABORATORY SERVICES

7-1. Laboratory Support

Medical laboratory assets function in HSS operations by analyzing body fluids and tissues to determine disease processes or to identify microorganisms. The equipment and personnel available are limiting factors in the scope of laboratory services provided. As in many HSS functions, the sophistication of laboratory services improves at each successive echelon of care.

7-2. Echelon I Care

Although laboratory personnel are not assigned to Echelon I units, some laboratory information will be presented to physicians at this echelon. For instance, throat cultures and analysis results will be provided for their routine sick call duties. Since Echelon I units have no holding capability, sophisticated laboratory procedures will not be required.

7-3. Echelon II Care

Echelon II is the first point where a laboratory specialist will be located. In addition to the support he provides to medical personnel at Echelon I, he will also provide the same support at Echelon II. There are two laboratory specialists at each treatment station, except in airborne divisions and in nondivisional medical companies (clearing), which only have one. Medical laboratory assets at this echelon are austere to keep pace with a highly mobile organization. Laboratory tests are limited to manual procedures such as hematocrit, white blood cell count, urinalysis, and gram staining.

7-4. Echelon III Care

a. A laboratory officer is available at this echelon. He is assisted by a laboratory NCO and medical laboratory specialists. They use both manual and semiautomated equipment. These resources are found in corps hospitals. In addition, a pathologist/blood transfusion consultant is available. Augmentation of specific hospital laboratories or augmentation of the laboratory

capability of an entire corps is possible with the special teams and detachments discussed in paragraph 7-6.

b. Laboratory equipment and the variety of laboratory tests available at each type of hospital in the CZ are similar. However, the laboratory staffs and equipment are tailored to satisfy the unique mission of each hospital type.

7-5. Echelon IV Care

a. Echelon IV medical laboratory resources consist of pathologists, biochemists, microbiologists, clinical laboratory officers, NCO personnel, medical laboratory specialists, and sophisticated laboratory equipment. These resources are located in COMMZ hospitals.

b. The laboratory in the GH is the most sophisticated of all hospital laboratories found in a theater. General hospital laboratory personnel may find demand for their services as medical and paramedical consultants to other hospitals in the COMMZ and CZ. These same consultants may also be asked to provide staff functions to higher headquarters in the theater of operations.

7-6. Augmentation of Organic Laboratory Support

a. Area and Unit Medical Support Teams. Team OA, dispensary, and Teams OB and OC, general dispensary, have organic laboratory personnel and equipment.

b. Medical Professional and Ancillary Service Teams. Team MM, miscellaneous service, can provide a personnel augmentation of three medical laboratory specialists, without equipment or supervision, to MTFs at the rate of one team per 1,600 beds in the CZ and one team per 16,000 beds in the COMMZ. These personnel can be used to accommodate unusually high work loads or aid in the investigation of special problems. An example of a special problem is the outbreak of an infectious disease. Supervision and equipment would be provided by the gaining unit. Supervision can also be augmented, as cited below.

c. Medical Facility Expansion Teams.

(1) Team MQ, pharmacy, laboratory, and x-ray control, can provide a total of six personnel, including one clinical laboratory officer and one medical laboratory specialist, for any hospital that undergoes an expansion of 200 to 400 beds. Team MQ would supervise the activities of augmentation Teams MM and MS, as required.

(2) Team MS, clinical laboratory, with nine medical laboratory specialists and equipment can provide clinical laboratory support to any hospital which expands its capability by 200 beds. A 400-bed expansion can be accommodated by collocating and combining the efforts of one each Team MM, MQ, and MS.

d. Area Medical Laboratory and Expansion Teams, TOE 08-650H0. There are four area medical laboratory teams that may be employed in the COMMZ and CZ. Team VA, area medical laboratory detachment, is a 35-man stand-alone detachment allocated on the basis of one per corps in the CZ and one per corps supported in the COMMZ. Personnel, supply, and maintenance support is obtained through hospital centers, medical groups, or medical

battalions. The Team VA provides effective and efficient reference laboratory services for hospitals in its geographic area of responsibility, with expertise in the clinical laboratory disciplines of biochemistry, microbiology, parasitology, and entomology. This capability is further augmented in the COMMZ by adding five-man teams—Team VB, pathology laboratory expansion; Team VC, veterinary laboratory expansion; and Team VE, immunology and serology laboratory expansion. The addition of Team VB, VC, or VE, alone or in combinations, in the CZ is made only when necessary to meet special requirements in the theater. The employment of one or more of the area laboratory teams anywhere in the theater would depend upon relative military stability and the need for long-term reference laboratory support. The number of teams used would depend upon the size of the theater and the number of hospitals that require support. These teams could also serve as the laboratory base for research and development efforts, as required. Medical and paramedical personnel assigned to these units may be asked to provide staff and consultation services throughout the theater of operations. An area medical laboratory is depicted in Figure 7-1.

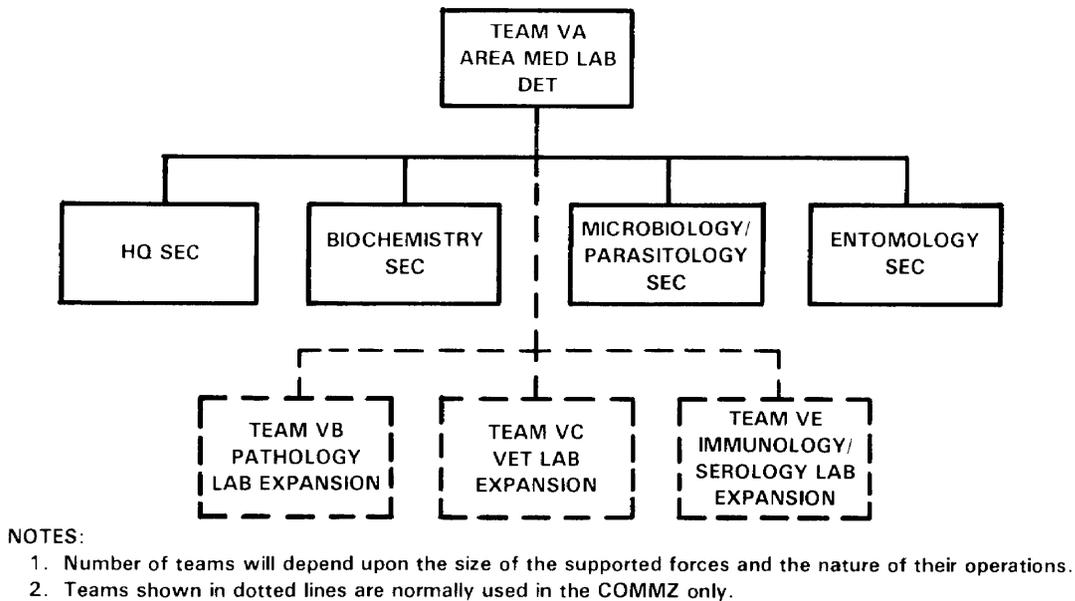


Figure 7-1. Type area medical laboratory.

7-7. Theater Army Medical Laboratory

A high technology independent area medical

laboratory is envisioned for the future. (See Appendix D.)