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## Demand management and optimization using minimal re-test intervals

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**D**emand management and demand optimization strategies require a multi-faceted approach with buy-in to ensure success. To that end, we engaged with clinical colleagues to explore how to optimise the services that we provide. We commenced an initiative to curb inappropriate demand by restricting certain tests within a repeat time window (a lock-out interval). We describe here initial data from the first set of tests that we have locked-out as an approach to manage demand. We piloted this approach with a sub-set of tests from within the chemistry, haematology and microbiology sections of the laboratory, with the intention that if there is demonstrable benefit, that other tests will be considered for restriction on a time basis. In 2016, we identified an initial list of 19 common tests to lock-out, implementing minimal repeat frequencies that the literature supports, adds no clinical value. For technical reasons, we were not able to lock-out 5 of the tests (because there was a clinically justified reason for a request to be from multiple sites such as wound swabs – and to lock-out the test would have restricted valid tests from being requested). Data was captured from 1st January to the 30th June for 2016 (before the lock-outs were implemented) and 2017 to compare the increase in tests that were restricted compared to those that were not. The locked-out group of tests reduced by an overall average of 6.4% versus the previous year, and saved 1.7 million Saudi Arabian Riyal (SAR) during 6 months period. Given that we were growing at +7% year over year, this means that the testing volume reduced by approximately 13% in real terms for all tests.

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