ADC E+P - How to interpret

BLOOD LACTATE

D Marikar, P Babu, M Fine-Goulden

Lactate is an important molecule with complex biological functions – it is not a simple marker of hypoxia or a waste-product of metabolism.

- Elevated lactate levels indicate a metabolic imbalance between production, consumption and cellular transport.
- A normal lactate at presentation does not rule out severe sepsis or septic shock and should not be considered reassuring in the presence of adverse clinical signs.
- In sepsis, a high blood lactate at presentation should prompt careful monitoring, as persistent hyperlactatemia is associated with organ dysfunction and mortality.
- High lactate does not help diagnose NEC but in neonates with confirmed NEC, hyperlactatemia is associated with poorer outcomes.