of reagents supplied by Helena. We also quantified CK-MB mass concentration, using the Ektachem CK-MB slide according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. As indicated in the following tabulation, these patients’ sera demonstrated some interference with the Ektachem assay that produced falsely high results. Electrophoresis revealed that all samples contained a macro CK migrating halfway between the CK-MB and CK-MM regions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ektachem CK-MB slide assay</th>
<th>Electrophoresis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>serum CK (U/L)</td>
<td>CK-MB * (U/L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reference interval <15 U/L.

We suspected the patients’ macro CK of causing this interference, because macro CK and false Ektachem CK-MB results appeared simultaneously. The method is therefore not specific for creatine kinase alone.

References


A. Ruelland
C. Clerc
B. Legras
L. Cloarec

Lab. de Biochim. Méd.
Hotel-Dieu
35033 Rennes Cedex, France

Safe, Easy Removal of Cobas Bio Sample Cups

To the Editor:

The Cobas Bio Centrifugal Analyzer (Roche Analytical Instruments, Nutley, NJ 07110) is used for various clinical laboratory determinations. One of its features is a 30-position sample tray. The plastic sample cups used in this tray have a detent, which locks the cups in place and allows selected samples in the tray to be passed over by the instrument. A drawback of this cup-retaining feature is the time needed to empty the sample trays. Each cup must be unfastened individually, a tedious and time-consuming process that increases the risk of spills and contamination.

We thought of a simple device (Figure 1) to release the cups from the retaining detent. To construct it we simply cut an 11.8-cm round hole in a 20.32-cm square of 1.27-cm thick polyvinyl chloride sheet. The cup remover can be used in two ways. To release the cups but have them remain loosely in the sample tray, place the device on a countertop, then place the tray over the hole in the device and press down. To empty a tray, place the tray on top of the device, invert both over a waste receptacle and squeeze both together. The cups will be released and fall into the waste container. Use of this simple tool can save time and reduce the chance of spills or contamination during the sample disposal process.

Eric M. Klaus
Robert B. McComb

Clinical Chem. Lab.
Hartford Hospital
Hartford, CT 06115

Plasma Lipoprotein(a) and the Friedewald Formula

To the Editor:

There is an increasing acceptance of lipoprotein(a) (Lp(a)) as an independent risk factor for atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (1–3). At present, however, there is no commercially available method for routine quantification of this analyte. Here we present evidence demonstrating that Lp(a) cannot be esti-