



## Don't Order Barbiturate Testing as Workplace Drug Tests Due to Its Negligible Yield

Barbiturates, including Secobarbital, phenobarbital, butalbital, cyclobarbital, and pentobarbital, are central nervous system depressant drugs derived from barbituric acid. Historically, they were used as anxiolytics and hypnotics. Barbiturates have varying durations of action (from ultra-short to long acting) and act on the GABA system. However, due to safety concerns, benzodiazepines have largely replaced them for anxiety and insomnia treatment.

Barbiturate testing is still included in screening reagents for hundreds of thousands of workplace drug tests in Saudi Arabia, especially in the Ministry of Health, Poison Control and Forensic Medical Chemistry Centers, and emergency departments of some hospitals, despite no positive samples detected in the last two decades. Barbiturates (specifically "Secobarbital") are no longer commonly abused globally. Suggest discontinuing routine Barbiturate testing due to its negligible yield. Emphasize the need to screen for more relevant substances, such as new psychoactive substances.

It is recommended to use this test in psychiatric hospitals where patients may have a history of using barbiturates as part of their treatment. Encourage evidence-based decision-making.

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