

An assay is an investigative (analytic) procedure in laboratory medicine, pharmacology, environmental biology and molecular biology for qualitatively assessing or quantitatively measuring the presence, amount, or functional activity of a target entity (the analyte). The analyte can be a drug, a biochemical substance, or a cell in an organism or organic sample.

The measured entity is generally called the analyte, the measurand or the target of the assay. The assay usually aims to measure an intensive property of the analyte and express it in the relevant measurement unit (e.g. molarity, density, functional activity in enzyme international units, degree of some effect in comparison to a standard, etc.).

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