

QC COURSE

A course compiled by Dr. Jim McCulloch

MODULE 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of QC

There is only one reason to perform Quality Control (QC) in the clinical laboratory. It is NOT performed solely because you have been told to do it; or because you want to fill in crosses on a wall chart; or because it is part of your accreditation protocols.

QC is done for the simple reason that patients deserve good quality results from path labs. A good and effective QC system is one that works to the benefit of patients. In fact, let's turn that phrase around. If your QC system does not maintain or improve the quality of your patient results – stop doing QC altogether. Or, just a thought, perhaps you should stop doing patient samples?

You will know that you work in a CLINICAL laboratory. Remember that well. You do not work in a STATISTICAL laboratory. What you offer your wards or referring doctors is very much a clinical service, albeit it one that uses statistics as a piece of information on which you have to make decisions. But stats are simply there to guide or alert us to potential problems. How many times have you been asked by a doctor if you are sure of your result? All too often the response is to say, well, my QC is within +/- 2 Standard Deviations (SDs). We then expect this clinical person to accept that piece of statistical nonsense. He or she does not understand or care about stats. Besides which, how good are your SDs anyway? Where did you get them? Are they wide and too generous, or tight and meaningful? The term SD means nothing without a deeper understanding of how to calculate effective SDs and use them efficiently.

This five-module course will attempt to help you understand, perform and use QC information effectively, to maintain or improve the quality of results you send back to your ultimate customer – the patient.

S A N A S



PROFICIENCY
TESTING Accredited to ISO Guide 43 and ILAC G13