

QUALITY MATTERS

No 27, January 2006

You will lose your Chemistry History

You should all know by now that the cycle of Chemistry EQA that will start in April 2006 will no longer have 26-sample full packs. Instead the largest pack will be 13 samples, to be analysed one every two weeks. We apologise to the few labs still ordering the 26-sample kit, but point out that there are many advantages, such as a much larger database. Where previously, half of our labs were returning results every second week, now every lab will return every week, meaning that the database should be approximately twice what it was. However, as you will all know, there are no free lunches, and thus there are disadvantages. The main one here is that the previous history will not be able to be carried forward. In other words, from week 1 of the next cycle, your Levey-Jennings and percentage Acceptable results will start afresh. We are sorry, but there is no other way, as the re-write required to change from one result every week to one every second week means that we cannot align your old results with your new ones. We recommend that you carefully retain the final report of the current cycle, for accreditation purposes and file it with this important notice.

Christmas with Thistle QA



You may never trust us again, but here we are enjoying a Christmas party at the end of last year. Hope you all had a good one too!

e-Reports

We are ready – are you? Send us an official email address now – or official approval for us to use your private email address and electronic reports will soon be winging to you. Almost all reports are available now and the rest will soon follow. No need to wonder about postal problems ever again – yippee!

CPD Accreditation

Mycology and Parasitology EQAs will both from Cycle 2 be “worth” 2 CPD points each. Each case study will come with 1 or two questions to be answered within your laboratory, as small group activities. Answers will be returned to Thistle QA and be collected and reported back to you, along with the correct answers. You need to retain the Thistle QA Participation certificate and the CPD Number for Thistle QA, namely MT 00025.

When this is added to the other CPD benefits to our customers, we hope you will agree that we focus on quality, with a commitment to continuous quality improvement through education. For those who do not know, we offer CPD points with Chemistry, Diff Slides, and Micro EQAs as well; PLUS all participants can take part free of charge in our 5-part QC Course with 2 points per module; PLUS attend our large multi-disciplinary seminar worth 6 points. Contact us for details.

TB Slides

We give in again. The TB Slide EQA is finished due to a total lack of interest. Sorry to the few who wanted it!

What is the Point?

We have at last been able to change the decimal points appearing on our reports, making them different – and more appropriate for each analyte. The “rule” is supposed to be that QC uses one more decimal point than routine and we have – generally – managed to apply this rule to our EQAs, with the SDs having one more than the mean. Please be aware that this may on occasion result in the mean shown being closer to one of the SDs than the other – we cannot help the fact that rounding up causes apparent mathematical illusions...

PT Practices – and how to reduce errors

A recent study funded by CDC attempted to find the main sources for error in PTT testing and make recommendations on how to reduce them. Hundreds of labs took part in this survey which concluded that although there are a variety of recommendations, such as the best ISI values to use, from 0.9 to “close to” 1.00, the error-prone steps are as follows:

- Use reagents with low ISI values
- Collect specimens in tubes with 3.2% sodium citrate
- Report INRs.

Any surprises there?

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