

## QUALITY MATTERS

No 29, April 2006

### The Chemistry History Story - again

**If you know this already, don't read any further.**

You will all be aware that the latest cycle of Chemistry EQA no longer has 26-sample full packs. Instead the largest pack is 13 samples, to be analysed one every two weeks. The biggest single advantage to all participants will be the much larger database, approximately twice what it was. However, there are disadvantages. Your performance 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.

### TSH

The Chemistry AdCom has agreed that we change the Acceptable percentage for TSH on the ImmunoAssay EQA to 20% with immediate effect. We examined the apparent poor performance carefully, to find that the percentage of poor results was high at all levels of TSH in the samples, and no kit was better or worse than any other. So, poor performance was neither related to concentrations or kits in use. There was no disagreement from AdCom, so the change will be instituted.

### Seminars – Annual Quality Talk

The successful seminar in Durban last year will be followed by a few more this year. One is already planned for a private group in Pretoria in May, with another in Johannesburg in June, and one later this year in Cape Town. Brochures will be sent out to those Thistle customers in the relevant area. Watch and read your mail!

### CD4 – EQA

A pilot study is underway, starting with extensive stability trials. We are optimistic that the many logistical problems can be solved and that a new EQA will soon be ready. We hope to offer this along with a Viral Load set of samples, to fully cover the “roll out” currently building up speed.

### PDF Reports

Electronic reports have succeeded and the new style of e-reports have many improvements over the old printed format, namely a tighter style, better graphics, and more information (such as concentrations etc under each graph, and an average SD shown beside each Levey-Jennings). But several negative comments have been received, some regretting the loss of the Poor/Acceptable graphs that form the first section of the printed reports. If you want to have a look at electronic reports tell us and we'll send you a specimen.

Some other people state that they do not want to receive the electronic reports at all – despite all the above advantages PLUS the big improvement in turn-around time but we will hopefully one day convert you all. It is our new mission, to be as paperless as possible.

**NB: To those receiving the e-reports on the current trial – from 19<sup>th</sup> April we will only be sending you e-reports and the printed report, currently following MUCH later, will cease.**

### SANAS

We passed our latest audit, this time with four findings, and are pleased to relate that we have the dual accreditation shown below. For those who need to know such things, 3 findings related to management issues (those covered by The Boss), while only 1 was technical (the area covered by Marlize). It is my intention to turn that around next time, which we hope will be 2 years away. Seriously, warm congratulations to Marlize and the team – they are really special people!

### Microbiology EQA

Our new report format is almost ready. The future micro set-up will include multiple organisms per vial, with one or more pathogen present; collection of the organism identification to a level appropriate to the laboratory type or complexity; and sensitivities. No other information will be collected, making our results similar to those you report for routine patient samples. Our reports will change accordingly and will be accompanied by a full “user description” to help you get maximum value from them.

By Dr Jim McCulloch

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PROFICIENCY  
TESTING

Accredited to ISO Guide 43 & ILAC G13