

QUALITY MATTERS

No 30, June 2006

Diff Slide EQA

This EQA comes with a request that participants tell us their opinion on the quality of the slides themselves. For Cycle 27, which ended in February this year, we recorded 908 responses from participants on the six slides submitted. Approximately 11% of respondents thought the slide quality to be poor, representing 11% of the responses received. This means that 89% of those receiving slides thought the quality to be either acceptable or good, with 63% saying acceptable and 26% good. It is always difficult to interpret subjective comments but it would seem that the vast majority of participants on our Diff Slide EQA are happy with the quality of the slides we send out. We regard this customer satisfaction survey to be positive. Thanks to all those who made the effort to tell us what they think.

Pretoria Seminar

We conducted the latest seminar in the TQA-AQT series in Pretoria in May 2006. With almost 50 attendees, we received 40 responses to our customer survey on lectures, venue, catering, and so on. While there were areas where we need to improve the quality, in general those attending gave Thistle and its presentation team a strong thumbs-up. One lecture even gained more "excellent" ratings than the catering! To remind those who have not yet attended these sessions, there are four lectures, a general one on quality improvement, and one each in the area of Microbiology, Haematology and Chemistry. And, apart from lunches and few laughs, there are six CEU points for those sticking out the whole day.

Seminars in the future

The next one is planned for Johannesburg later in June, with one scheduled for Cape Town in August. Details will follow, as soon as the venues are confirmed. We are also thinking about some mini-versions, in smaller centres like East London and Bloemfontein, so watch your mail box for details.

CD4 – EQA

Details will soon be sent out regarding this latest EQA from Thistle. Samples have been ordered and the stability trials have been successful, so as soon as we have our ducks in a row, we will let you know.

Bulk mailing and pdf reports

We are still making improvements to our system for sending pdf or e-reports. In general, most labs will not notice the most recently commissioned changes, which involve increased efficiency within our offices, but they will help us to give you the service you need. There have been hiccups in the pdf system, but in general it is working well. We thank you for your patience and trust it is being rewarded by a faster and much more efficient system. If not, why have you not told us? We need to know what is going wrong!

Lipo (a) and (CSF) IgG

We are not happy with the performance of these analytes, yet again. Lipo (a) has not benefited from the influx of Randox results, as there are simply too many different methods with different populations of results. The stats are being closely analysed, but to give you one example: a single lab that more often than not sends in results using the wrong units, screws up the database, more often than not, even though there is a database number of greater than 25! Maybe we should change our protocols to allow us to bump them off the database when the results are rubbish – just joking, for that would truly open up a can of worms. The situation with the IgG results on our CSF programme is similar, with a very small number of results being frequently destroyed by a single lab sending in the wrong units.

Further conclusions will be sent to the users of these programmes once we have analysed the results in detail. Meantime, if you send in results for either analyte, please check your reports. You could be the one lab causing the problem!

Retic Pilot Study

A few people has called Thistle asking for a report on the Automate Retic Pilot Study – please take note that we will only send this report at the end of cycle 31, once we have received all the results for this cycle. We will analyse the stats of a full cycle and let you know.

New Infectious Diseases tests added

We have added the following new analytes to the Serology profile:

TMX: Widal H, Widal O, Weil Felix OX2,

Weil Felix OX19, Brucella abortus

Allergy: FX5, Phadiotop and

Cotinine.

Please submit your results for these analytes if applicable to your lab, in order for us to build up a good, meaningful database.

By Dr Jim McCulloch

S A N A S

PROFICIENCY
TESTING

Accredited to ISO Guide 43 & ILAC G13