

## QUALITY MATTERS

No 40, November 2007

### Windhoek seminars

We conducted two seminars recently in Namibia. Assessments by those attending were generally excellent, but two complaints were made. One that construction noises outside disturbed the sessions and another that the seminar was too short. Well, we can do nothing about the booming economy in Windhoek, but will do our best to lengthen the seminar next time – to maybe six or seven hours, perhaps? Thanks to all those attending for being an outstanding audience, which means they stayed awake all day!

### Blood Gas – QC or patient mode?

A recent question to those on this programme tried to find out which mode they used, patient or QC. Some instruments have only one mode but we received only 15 replies, with most using the QC mode. The response was too low for us to take any action.

### Add analytes to the Urine Chem EQA or not?

Myoglobin? We only had eleven responses to this question; with only four saying they would send results to us. Again, not enough to justify the addition of Myoglobin to this EQA, and certainly not enough to provide meaningful stats.

B-2-Microglobulin? Fourteen responses showed that only two results would be returned. Again, no action from our side.

### LDH grouping incorrect

One of our regular quality checks is the monitoring of SDs and CVs, to ensure as far as possible that labs are grouped correctly, i.e. to make sure that those registered wrongly don't mess up the data base and make the SDs too high! Recently a high CV was noted and after some stats investigation, we found that the problem was not here in South Africa, but elsewhere. We pointed this out gleefully to our "more advanced" European colleagues, who thanked us very politely and said they would fix it. One up for Africa!

### Our prize winner is...



Every two years we present a prize at the Med Tech congress to someone who has "made a quality difference" in our opinion. This year at Bloemfontein, Eileen Walker (seen above with Marlize of Thistle) was awarded the prize. Eileen became Quality Manager at Ampath many years ago and has seen her brood of more than a hundred labs achieve SANAS accreditation, through her dedication and determination to "make a quality difference". Well done, Eileen. You deserve it.

### New Haematology supplier

Currently we are evaluating a new supplier for Haematology material, as the previous supplier has discontinued production. Trials will initially focus on achieving reproducible and consistent results on all analysers and on stability. In view of the short time period we have been given, long term stability will only be possible later. We have stability data from the potential new supplier who is ISO 9000 certified and it shows that 3 months stability is assured. If we use this material, we will send out only a three month supply of material for our Haematology EQA. You will be kept informed as we seek to continue with a quality haematology service.

### Diff slide quality

Cycle 30 of this EQA had 921 responses about slide quality, with 49 saying poor, 571 saying acceptable and 301 saying good, over the six months. This means we had a 5% poor rate for our slides during this cycle. We are happy with this rating? And so, it seems, are most of you out there.

By Dr Jim McCulloch

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TESTING

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