

QUALITY MATTERS

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Andrology EQA

We have been asked about the stability of our Andrology material. To date we have not performed stability testing on these "samples" as they are for immediate analysis on receipt in the lab. Nevertheless, we asked our Andrology experts for help. It seems that a study at the University of Pretoria established that stained slides last for more than two years. Spermatozoa in a stain containing a bit of formaldehyde and stored at 4°C last for about a year. The DVDs we have still to do stability studies on, but suspect that they will last for a period of time depending on how often you watch them! Seriously, we hope you like the snazzy little DVDs now being used – they look really cool to me!

Diff slide quality

Thanks to the eagle eyes that spotted my arithmetic error last month. Clearly, the diff slide quality is far better than my ability to count. You should all have received the corrected version already but if not, ask Cecli for it, at cecli@thistle.co.za.

Seminars for 2008

We will be doing even more seminars next year. Currently a new set of presentations is undergoing preparation and will be announced soon. The planning will change however. We found last year that we received random requests, which meant that for several months we did no presentations, and then suddenly we were inundated with requests. At the start of 2008, we will circulate a list asking those interested to fill in where, when and how many will attend. We will try to fit in as many request as possible, and coordinate regions between groups as far as possible – and each group can have its own seminar in particular regions if necessary, as different groups of labs have different needs and issues.

Siemens Advia 1200 - Glucose

There is a difference between the Oxidase and the Hexokinase glucose results on this instrument, with the Oxidase having more users and being approximately 5% higher. We do not propose to create separate groups due to low numbers using Hexokinase – so if necessary keep this notice as "SANAS evidence".

Reports and SANAS

We have a new plan to make your life easier and to help get SANAS off your backs, as far as possible! It seems that sometimes SANAS assessors make findings based on our EQA reports and that often these findings are inappropriate. This, I believe, reflects a lack of proper understanding by the assessor – and by the labs that use our EQA services too! This is not right and we plan to address this issue during 2008.

We will produce a detailed document this year that will discuss each and every one of our reports from two aspects. First, what each section of the report means and second, how to interpret the report with a view to deciding whether you have a problem or not.

The first part will help new participants acclimatise to our report information – while "older" participants might just need those old pieces of grey matter stimulated.

The second part, troubleshooting, will attempt to take you through the difficult process of deciding what to do if your EQA reports are "bad", whatever that means. It is never easy to decide if an out of control EQA result is serious or not, and we will attempt to help with this.

What we are trying to do is achieve many things with this change as well as ensuring maximum "benefit" from the EQA reports

So, we hope to educate our users, so that they can educate the assessors during SANAS visits. It's a tall order trying to get everyone to see beyond the +/- 2 SD rule and actually apply clinical principles to EQA, rather than be bound by stats rules.

Wish me luck as I try to write this "fun" document please. And please excuse me if you think I am grumpy while doing it – it sure is quite a challenge!

Enrolments for 2008

Enrolments for 2008 are available on the web site under – no shocks here – "Enrolments". Go find the one you want!

By Dr Jim McCulloch