

UK NEQAS Haematology Newsletter

WORLDWIDE QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOR ALL

UK NEQAS is a global provider of EQA services with over 45 years' experience of delivering a comprehensive range of programmes to more than 8,000 diagnostic testing laboratories worldwide, all on a not-for-profit basis. The diversity of our current services extends quality monitoring to the pre and post-analytical phases of testing and to interpretive EQA (iEQA) and competency assessment tools. UK NEQAS Haematology continues to grow, with over 5,000 laboratory registrations in our services and a further 3,000 individual healthcare scientists registered in our educational morphology programme. As an organisation we continue to increase and amend our repertoire to accommodate changes in laboratory medicine.

RE-REGISTRATION 2017—2018

Re-registration for the participation year starting in April 2017 is now open online. You will receive your secure log-in and the re-registration link details by email. Participants registered through a group enrolment, e.g. by one of our distribution agents, will be re-registered directly by the agent. If you are not registered with us but are interested in our services, please call (+44 (0)1923 217878) or email (haem@ukneqas.org.uk)

Mayuri Wadhia, Office Manager

ESR SCHEME: ISO17043 ACCREDITED!

We are delighted to announce that the ESR scheme has been fully accredited to ISO17043:2010 and is included in our scope of accreditation. For our full accreditation details, go to www.ukas.com and search for accredited centre number 7805 or contact us at haem@ukneqas.org.uk.

The ESR scheme is offered as two different modules: the ES module for all instrument types except those using Alifax technology and the ESX module for Alifax instruments. Each laboratory can register as many instruments of either type as required.

Vatsala Soni

A (NEAR) LIFETIME IN UK NEQAS

2017 will be a year of major staff changes in UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion, with the retirement of two long-serving members of staff at the end of April.

Paul McTaggart started with UK NEQAS Haematology 26 years ago, when the scheme was still based at the Hammersmith Hospital under the original directorship of the founder Dr Mitchell Lewis. Paul will retire in April and will be replaced by Yvonne John, formerly Haematology Manager at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

Yvonne will take on the role of UK NEQAS Haematology Service Manager.

At the same time, we will bid farewell to Clare Milkins, the UK NEQAS BTLP Scheme Manager and Quality Manager for UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion. Our new Quality Manager will be Claire Whitham.

We wish Paul and Clare well in retirement and look forward to working with our new colleagues.

Barbara De la Salle

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
TUESDAY OCTOBER 17, 2017

**MANCHESTER UNITED
FOOTBALL CLUB**

**20TH ANNUAL
PARTICIPANTS'
MEETING**

**'LEARNING FROM EQA: 20
YEARS OF UK NEQAS
HAEMATOLOGY PARTICIPANTS'
MEETINGS'**

*To register your interest email
haemsymposium@ukneqas.org.uk*

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
FRIDAY OCT 20, 2017

**QUEEN ELIZABETH II
CONFERENCE CENTRE
LONDON**

**PAN-UK NEQAS
MEETING
'UK NEQAS: COORDINATING
POCT TESTING'**

*To register your interest email
office@ukneqas.org.uk*

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BLOOD FILMS PERFORMANCE SCORING

The challenge of introducing performance monitoring for the Blood Films for Morphology surveys is underway. We first raised this in this newsletter last year and then introduced the subject again at the UK NEQAS Haematology participants meeting in Manchester in October. The models being tested are based on the use of two different performance systems: one that assesses your results against the consensus and a second that monitors whether you have seen the most important features selected by our morphology advisors. The results of shadow scoring over the last year are very encouraging and we are looking forward this year to enlarging the scope of the shadow scoring to include a small number of volunteer laboratories to test the scoring systems with us. Performance will be reported back to participants slide by slide, with an annual, overall report, to demonstrate performance over a range of 16 cases. If you are interested in volunteering to test the new system, contact Jon Sims (jon.sims@whht.nhs.uk).

Jon Sims

Staff update

We were sorry to lose Pinky Bambhra from our Admin team in October 2016. A new Business Manager will start in February 2017.

We were delighted to welcome Mayuri Wadbia as full-time Office Manager in May 2016.

We also welcome Yvonne John to her role as UK NEQAS Haematology Service Manager

Steering Committee and Scientific Advisory Group Membership

UK NEQAS Haematology thanks all members for their time and effort

In 2016 we welcomed Dr Gavin Cho, Mr David Hawden, Mr John Lambert, Mr Stephen Garner and Mr Graham Bellamy

We bid farewell, with our deepest thanks, to Dr Patrick Carrington, Mr Martin Jarvis, Dr Gail Mifflin, Mr Brendan Fitzpatrick and Dr Rod Hinchliffe.

We were deeply saddened by the death of the lay member of the Steering Committee, Ms Karen Sandler.

WHITE CELL DIFFERENTIAL COUNTING

The changes we promised in last year's newsletter to the manual WBC differential results entry screen are now finalised and the new look screen will be released ready for the March survey. Much of the idea behind the new screen format is to reduce the variation in results we receive and the new screen will provide a simpler, easier to use interface for participants. Use of the new screen should be self-explanatory but please check the instructions for these surveys carefully in case of any updates.

Non-participation scoring for manual WBC differential results will be introduced later this year after the introduction of the new input screen.

Participants will also be aware that online reports were introduced for the manual WBC differential surveys in August 2016 with survey 1603DF, meaning that all morphology reports are now supplied electronically. Some improvements in the report format are under development, including graphical representation of the data analysis.

Jon Sims

PREPQ UPDATE

Errors in the pre and post-analytical phases account for the majority of errors in diagnostic testing and laboratories are expected to demonstrate a means to monitor and manage these errors as part of accreditation to ISO15189:2012. The UK NEQAS pan-disciplinary PREPQ monitoring service will be launched from April 2017, as a benefit of membership to participants. The service has been updated following recent publications and feedback from laboratories. Previous participants will be contacted directly by email with registration details and further information is available from our website or email (prepq@ukneqas.org.uk).

Barbara De la Salle

The ICSH Carol Briggs-Smalley Scholarship

The ICSH has established a scholarship to support a laboratory scientist in training to commemorate the life of Carol Briggs-Smalley (1958-2015). Although the deadline for 2017 applications has passed, further information for the future can be found from:

<http://icsh.org/awards/>

DON'T FORGET TO COMPLETE YOUR RE-REGISTRATION ON LINE!

ISO17043 ACCREDITATION UPDATE

UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion had its first annual surveillance visit from UKAS in August 2016 and accumulated just 4 non-conformances across the services provided, all of which were cleared to schedule.

See www.ukas.org.uk, searching with centre number 7805.

PARTICIPANTS' SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions to improve the service are always welcome. The following were received in the past few months:

- Inform participants that they may make a 'no results' submission if unable to process specimens, with a reason for the non-return, and avoid receiving a non-participation penalty
- Make the newsletter available on the website
- Review manual differential data entry screen to improve data capture, also improve graphical presentation of data in the DF report
- Consider amendments to some instrument groupings in FB and DL
- Review blood parasite data entry workflow, to remove 'glitches' and allow non-return of thick film assessment if not undertaken routinely
- Improve availability of repeat specimens in the DN scheme
- Update FB instructions with improved instructions from manufacturers on material handling
- Assess G6PD screen results according to the quantitative assay result, allowing intermediate as a 'correct' return where applicable
- Review performance criteria for reticulocyte scoring

Barbara De la Salle

HAEMOGLOBINOPATHIES

UK NEQAS Haematology offers one of the most comprehensive programmes of haemoglobinopathy EQA available. The programme has added 'liquid newborn screening' samples in recent years, simulating capillary blood samples from newborn infants sent for urgent screening before routine dried blood spot results are available. The liquid newborn distributions are established at a frequency of 2 specimens, 6 times per year and we are reviewing the feasibility of integrating these specimens with the main Abnormal Haemoglobins distributions and the introduction of web operation and analytical performance scoring. The DNA for Haemoglobinopathies programme will also see a new report format in the coming months, speeding up the analysis and personalised scoring reports. Participants may opt out of any parameter within our programmes that they do not offer as part of their routine service and we ask you to check your registered methods (especially sickle solubility and variant identification) at re-registration to ensure effective performance assessment.

Barbara Wild

THANKS TO OUR MORPHOLOGY CHAMPIONS

UK NEQAS Haematology provides sixteen cases per year for the Blood Films for Morphology programme, prepared from clinical samples surplus to diagnostic testing and supplied by participants. We are very grateful to the 'morphology champions', listed on the right, who have worked to keep such a good stock of cases in our library in 2016. Our expert morphology panel commended the range and quality of cases available at this year's case selection meeting. We still need cases and have a 'wishlist' that will fill the gaps in what we have available. If you are interested and able to supply a blood sample for the Blood Films scheme, contact Jon Sims (jon.sims@whht.nhs.uk) for further details of what we are seeking. As a token of our appreciation for this support, we offer participants a complementary registration for the annual participants' meeting or the digital morphology scheme. *Jon Sims*

Morphology Champions 2016

*Queen Elizabeth
Hospital Woolwich*

*Royal Berkshire
Hospital Reading*

*Watford General
Hospital*

*Central Middlesex
Hospital*

*Northwick Park
Hospital*

*Royal Marsden
Hospital, Sutton*

*Queen's Hospital,
Romford*

*St Mary's Hospital,
Paddington*

*St George's Hospital,
Tooting*

Whipps Cross Hospital

*Charing Cross and
Hammersmith Hospitals*

*St John's Hospital, West
Lothian*

Thank you!

DEVELOPING OUR SERVICES: WHAT'S GOING ON

Performance scoring is being developed in blood films for morphology, blood parasite identification, rapid diagnostic testing for malaria and the liquid newborn option in the haemoglobinopathies.

The need for new parameters has been reviewed. Work has been undertaken on the use of UK NEQAS assay material for RDW and MPV as part of the FBC programme and the extension of performance monitoring in ADLC beyond neutrophils and lymphocytes.

Teaching sheets for manual differential counting and calculation of manual NRBC have been developed with the assistance of our expert morphology panel.

Addition of new schemes, to fill gaps in the repertoire: the highest priorities are being reviewed following feedback from the questionnaire sent in 2016, to

which 220 laboratories responded. Expressions of interest will be requested from participants once the initial pre-pilot work has been completed successfully.

Improvement and updating current digital services has started: to allow us to expand our provision of interpretive and educational EQA, such as the Digital Morphology, as well as the use of digital materials to fill the gaps in the range of survey material provided in other schemes.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME AN ADVISOR TO UK NEQAS?

If you would like to join our expert advisory groups and help us with these developments, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact Barbara De la Salle with brief details of your areas of interest.

NRBC SCHEME

We are working with the manufacturers of the assay material to integrate NRBC counts into the ADLC scheme where possible. This will be rolled out in stages as assay material becomes available. In the meantime, we can accept registrations from Sysmex X-class participants, Beckman Coulter LH users and Horiba Pentra users. Beckman Coulter DxH800 users will be contacted later in year once assay material is available. Registration of any instrument group will depend upon sufficient users in each group and we will contact you if the minimum number is not met. *Vatsala Soni*

UK NEQAS HAEMATOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING

The 2016 UK NEQAS Haematology Participants' meeting was held in October at the Emirates Old Trafford Cricket Club, Manchester with an attendance of 255 delegates. Over 95% of delegates who completed the online feedback form rated the day as very good or excellent. 2017 will mark 20 years of Annual Participants' Meetings. This year's theme will be 'Learning from EQA' and the meeting will be held at Manchester United Football Ground on Tuesday 17 October. To mark the anniversary, a social event will be held at the Hotel Football (opposite the Stadium) the evening before the conference. For more information, please email: haemsymposium@ukneqas.org.uk.

Isabella De-Rosa

UK NEQAS

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UK NEQAS CONSORTIUM NEWS

The UK NEQAS Consortium has undertaken a governance review in the past couple of years to ensure that all schemes and members of the Consortium work to the objectives required by the Charity Commission. As a result of the review, the organization's Articles of Association were reviewed and agreed in 2016. The central office has also developed a new web-site, which will be launched in the very near future. We hope that you will like the new design and functionality. UK NEQAS Haematology thanks Julie Gelder and the other Central Office staff for their hard work and support.

www.ukneqash.org