# EQAS AT CAREC

(CAREC)
PAHO/WHO

*Serving*
*23 Member Countries*
*in the English and Dutch*
*Speaking Caribbean*

**11th Meeting of Caribbean National Epidemiologists & Laboratory Directors**

**May 9-13, 2011**

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# OBJECTIVES

- Impact of EQAS on test performance
- Procedure for addressing discrepant results
- Challenges in maintaining effective participation in an EQAS
- Some choices regarding participation in EQAS
- Other means of participating in EQA
- CAREC's role in coordinating EQA panels for WHO

# IMPACT OF EQAS ON TEST PERFORMANCE

**Minimal**

- Few instances of discordant results

- Errors detected not due to testing paramaters e.g., transcription

- PT sample are still being treated as special so usually most experienced person will do the testing. Therefore not a true reflection of routine sample

# PROCEDURE - ADDRESSING DISCREPANT RESULTS

- Complete an EQAS Discordant Investigation Form
- Investigation by the responsible technical coordinator and quality manager – this may suggest immediate remedial action dependent upon the nature or severity of the discrepancy
- If cause for discrepant result cannot be determined the analysis of the original specimen is repeated (if possible).
- In certain circumstances a repeat specimen from the distributing laboratory may be requested if results are not as intended.
- Remedial action or changes to working practices are implemented and communicated to all staff at laboratory meetings and recorded in the minutes of these meetings

# PROCEDURE - ADDRESSING DISCREPANT RESULTS

EQAS PROVIDER _____ DATE _____

CAREC NO. _____ TEST _____ VIAL/SLIDE _____

RESULT _____ REFERENCE RESULT _____

1. Was the problem related to any of the following? Please tick as appropriate and please explain on page 2.

| Error Number | *CLERICAL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH TEST* | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mislabelled vial or slide | |
| Error Number | *TECHNICAL OPERATION OF METHOD* | |
| 6. | EQA material improperly prepared or stored | |
| Error Number | *METHOD(S) USED TO PERFORM THE TEST* | |
| 16. | Inadequate written procedures (SOPs) | |
| Error Number | *EQUIPMENT FUNCTION* | |
| 24. | Problem with equipment function (*please specify*): | |
| Error Number | *ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS* | |
| 26. | Inadequate staffing | |

# CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN AN EQAS

- High costs
- Human resource issues
  - Lack of staff
  - Failure to treat sample as routine
- Delays of specimen reception
  - Storage in customs
- Difficulty in sourcing suitable panels e.g.,
  - Molecular biology

# SOME CHOICES REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN EQAS

| OrganizatiO | Panels Offered | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| QMPLS | Full range | 300 - 600 |
| CAP (College of American Pathologists) | Full range | 200 - 400 |
| API | Full range | 400 - 600 |
| Pro Sangue | Blood transfusion | Free |
| Digital PT | Full range | 400 - 600 |
| UK NEQAS | Blood Chemistry, Haematology | Free to CMC |
| QASI | CD4 | Free |

# OTHER MEANS OF PARTICIPATING IN EQA

- 5.6.4 The laboratory shall participate in interlaboratory comparisons such as those organized by external quality assessment schemes.

- 5.6.5 Whenever a formal interlaboratory comparison programme is not available, the laboratory shall develop a mechanism for determining the acceptability of procedures not otherwise evaluated. Whenever possible, this mechanism shall utilize externally derived challenge materials such as exchange of samples with other laboratories.

# OTHER MEANS OF PARTICIPATING IN EQA

- Comparison of results with other labs – Inter-laboratory comparisons
- Internal quality assessment (IQA) –
  - - Use specimens as the test material.

- Advantage

  -- Monitors all activities involved in the passage of specimens through the laboratory, starting from reception and ending in the final reporting

  -- Assesses the reproducibility of tests within the laboratory when analysing common specimen types and organisms.

  -- Raises the awareness of staff to the importance of quality in every aspect of specimen and data processing.

- Disadvantage

  -- May not detect a major error e.g., problem with method as results can agree but still be incorrect

# CAREC'S ROLE IN COORDINATING EQA PANELS FOR WHO

- Monitoring of the following:
  - CMCs participating in the scheme
    - Commitment required
  - Receipt of panels by CMC
    - Confirmation that panel was received
    - Date of Receipt
    - Condition of panel
  - Submission of results to the provider
    - Date of submission
      - Reasons for late/no submission

## LABORATORY PROFICIENCY TESTING: LETTER OF COMMITMENT

I, Dr./Mr./Ms. _____Laboratory Head of _____am interested in participating in the following UK NEQAS proficiency schemes for _____. I agree to submit the panel results on or before the specified date to UK NEQAS. I also agree to share all information and assessments derived thereof to all relevant personnel with my laboratory and to ensure that the necessary follow-up corrective action is taken as and when necessary.

Please check the following contact information and change if necessary.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name:

Title:

Attention (if other person than above needs to be notified):

Title:

Name of Organization:

Address:

Telephone No:

Fax No:

Email:

……

Head of the Laboratory

# PT RECEIPT FORM

LABORATORY NAME/CODE _____
COUNTRY _____
PROGRAMME NAME _____
PANEL # _____

1. Panel received by the Laboratory YES _____ NO _____

   If panel was received please indicate the date of receipt ____/____/____
   DD MM YY

2. Condition of specimens upon receipt Satisfactory _____
   Unsatisfactory _____

……
Laboratory Director/Manager

# SUBMISSION OF RESULTS FORM

LABORATORY NAME/CODE _____
COUNTRY _____
PROGRAMME NAME _____
PANEL # _____
DATE DUE _____
Results submitted to provider on _____/_____/_____
DD MM YY

**If results were submitted late please indicate the reason – Tick as appropriate**

1. No reagents and/or kits
2. Shortage of staff
3. Insufficient time to process panels as they were received late (Indicate date _____ )
4. Other _____

**If results were not submitted please indicate the reason**

_____
_____

……..
Laboratory Director/Manager