



**UKNEQASFORCLINICALCHEMISTRY**  
UNITEDKINGDOMNATIONALEXTERNALQUALITYASSESSMENTSCHMES

# **WORKGROUP3 - INTERNATIONALASPECTS**

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# HOW CAN INTERNATIONAL EQA HELP?

- **promotion of EQA in countries or regions**
- **increase utilisation of EQA for low volume tests**
- **standardisation projects**
- **establishing networks of reference laboratories**
- **regional EQA where national schemes would be too small**

# ADVANTAGES&DISADVANTAGES

- **Advantages:**
  - largenumberofparticipants
    - greatervalidityofdata
    - affordabilityofspecialstudies
  - aggregationofdataonmethods
    - IVDindustryisglobal
  - internationalcomparability
- **Disadvantages:**
  - littleparticipantinfluenceondeign
  - practicalproblemwithspecimentransport
  - slowturnaround

# **SUBGROUPTOPICS**

- **3-1 Difficulties & barriers to be overcome**
- **3-2 Transport issues and international peer groups**
- **3-3 Definitions & procedures for international cooperation**
- **3-4 Orphan/low volume tests and criteria for international programs**
- **3-5 Conducting PT/EQA**

## 3-1 Austin Demby [Louise Barden]

- **What difficulties are there in providing relevant EQA samples across international or intercontinental boundaries?**
  - [language]
  - transport logistics
    - time and temperature
  - customs classification - what are EQA specimens?
  - tariff barriers

# What countries/regions have regulations creating non -tariff barriers inhibiting international cooperation, and how can they be removed?

- laboratory licensing systems
- accreditation requirements
- national protectionism
- *[sub-group experience]*

## 3-2CarlynCollins[SueEmpson]

- **Whattransportissuesinfluenceintercontinental useofEQA,andhowcantheyberesolved?**
  - timeandtemperature
  - classificationofEQAspecimens
    - UN,IATA,postalservices
  - infectiousandnon -infectiousmaterials

# Can international peer groups of EQAS be defined, and how?

- EQA:
  - scheme purpose (education, licensing, method assessment)
  - scheme design (specimens, target values)
- methods:
  - classification (instrument, reagent, calibrant)
  - coding



## 3-3RoongrasameeSoisangwan [VivienneJames]

- **What is needed to allow EQA information to be exchanged comparably internationally?**
  - data compatibility
    - data processing
    - report formats
    - scoring systems
  - compatibility with national schemes and needs

- **What procedures (eg meetings) can facilitate international cooperation between EQAS?**
  - WHO
    - International EQASs
    - workshops and training
  - IFCCCAQ
  - European experience
    - EUBCR, EQALM

## 3-4 Gary Myers [Chantal Maurice]

- **What processes facilitate EQA for 'orphan'/low volume assays, and what new processes are needed?**
  - supra-national infrastructure (ERNDIM, European networks)
  - cooperation between national providers
  - specimen exchanges systems
  - how can we get round the disadvantages?
    - slow turnaround, less communication, unresponsive, [language]

# What criteria should be used internationally for selection and provision of EQAS?

- customer-dependent!
  - what are the objectives of participating?
- fitness for purpose
  - value for money
  - cheapest not necessarily the most appropriate
- [logistics]
- [language]

## 3-5 Harry Hannon [Devery Howerton]

**What investigations (eg TB smears) are best assessed by reanalysis of clinical specimens than by sampled distribution?**

- distribution EQA doesn't match routine incidence (too high)
- re-screening is useful as QA/QC - has a role in EQA?
- is an audit of practice (eg cytogenetics) better than distribution EQA?
- can this include pre - and post - analytical performance?

- **How would costs compare with conventional EQA, and what practical concerns (eg sampling, re-screening quality, logistics) are there?**
  - ethics and consent for use of patients' material
  - numbers/proportion to be re-screened
  - selection of re-screening site
  - transport of specimens
  - potential for identification etc errors

# INTENDED OUTCOMES

- **conclusions and recommendations to facilitate:**
  - promotion of EQA in countries or regions
  - increase utilisation of EQA for low volume tests
  - standardisation projects
  - establishing networks of reference laboratories
  - regional EQA where national schemes would be too small