

UK NEQAS Haematology Newsletter

DIGITAL MORPHOLOGY – A NEW CHAPTER

Exciting times lay ahead for the popular Digital Morphology scheme. This digital CPD scheme for blood film morphology has been in use for nearly ten years but during the summer months it will be undergoing a transformation when it is moved to a brand new platform. UKNEQAS Haematology is committed to ensuring that the transition is as seamless as possible and we will keep all of our users regularly updated with progress.

We would like to point out to users that as a consequence of the move to a new platform, the old 'Slidepath' website will be closing down, sometime towards the end of this year. If you have any certificates or cases that you would particularly like to keep a record of, you might like to think about taking screenshots or printouts of your work. *Jon Sims*

MAKING CHANGES ONLINE

We made a significant change this year to improve our online security in order to allow participants to reset and change their passwords and contact details online. This means that you do not have to email these details to us and wait for us to make the changes for you. Your passwords are no longer visible to us so if you are unable to log in, follow the instructions on the 'Reset my password' link. If you need assistance, there is a guidance document under the 'Password Update' announcement in the News and Announcements section of the website or please email the Admin team. The Cytochemistry scheme is now online for both data entry and reports, and the Malaria Rapid Diagnostic Test scheme goes live for data entry and reports from the February survey. Please let us know if you need more information or have any problems with either of these changes. The Documents section of the website contains the Participants' Manual, Annual Report, distribution schedules and a number of other documents available for download.

Vasilis Rapanakis and Gilbert Sakyi, IT

UK NEQAS HAEMATLOGY VISITS MANCHESTER UNITED FC

But without our football boots! We welcomed over 270 delegates to the 20th Annual Participants' meeting at the Old Trafford stadium in October 2017. The meeting included talks from Dr Wayne Thomas on the laboratory diagnosis of iron deficiency, Dr Julian Barth on what is meant by 'normal' in laboratory medicine and Professor Barbara Bain on platelet morphology, amongst others. The

overall feedback was excellent, with 99% of delegates scoring the meeting content as satisfactory or better. There is a strong emphasis amongst delegates to focus on educational topics in laboratory haematology and the Scheme will continue to bear that in mind for future programmes. The 2018 meeting will return to the Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham.

Barbara De la Salle

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
TUESDAY OCTOBER 9, 2018

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE
MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM
BIRMINGHAM**

**21ST ANNUAL
PARTICIPANTS'
MEETING**

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

The ICSH Carol Briggs-Smaley Scholarship

The ICSH has established a scholarship to support a laboratory scientist in training to commemorate the life of Carol Briggs-Smaley. The deadline for 2018 applications is March 1st 2018; further information can be obtained from:

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



Carol Briggs (1958 - 2015)

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BLOOD FILMS PERFORMANCE SCORING

The challenge of introducing performance monitoring for the Blood Films for Morphology scheme was raised in this newsletter last year and then we 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. Performance will be reported back to participants slide by slide, with an annual, overall report, to demonstrate performance over a range of 16 cases. The results of shadow scoring over the last two years are very encouraging and we are looking forward this year to working with our software suppliers in order to bring a test system online. We will be looking for volunteer laboratories to help us to test the new system, if you are interested please contact Jon Sims (jon.sims@whht.nhs.uk). *Jon Sims*

Staff update

We appointed Nazia Hussain as our Business Manager in February 2017. Julia Mabesan joined us as a senior EQA scientist in August 2017 with Duljeet Chohan as Haemoglobinopathy Lead and Hannah Ellicott as an MLA. We bade farewell to Dr Barbara Wild who retired as our Haemoglobinopathy Consultant in November 2017; also Sue Saunders from Logistics and Seema Pau from our Admin team.

Steering Committee and Scientific Advisory Group Membership

UK NEQAS

Haematology thanks all its advisors for their time and expert advice.

In 2017 we welcomed:

Mr Andrew Platt, Mr Gavin Knight, Dr Gerardo Errico, Ms Mary Ann Cameron, Dr Mike Leach, Dr Laura Ahmed, Mr Richard Blanco, Mrs Tracey Smith-Straney

We bade farewell, with our deepest thanks, to:

Mr Neil Porter, Dr Jo Howard

We were deeply saddened by the death of Mr Walter Sharp, of the General Scientific Advisory Group.

WHITE CELL MANUAL DIFFERENTIAL COUNTING

The new manual WBC differential results entry screen is now in routine use and is working well and we have been able to introduce non-participation scoring. We are also exploring systems for performance scoring for the manual WBC differential. Online reports for this survey were introduced in August 2016 with survey 1603DF, so that all morphology reports are now supplied electronically. We are developing improvements in the report format, including a graphical representation of the data analysis. *Jon Sims*

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE 2017

Thank you to all who completed this questionnaire last year. The report is in the final stages of preparation and we will include an update on the outcome in the Annual Report for 2017. Major actions arising from the feedback in the survey will be added to our Quality Improvement Plan. *Yvonne John*

G6PD ASSAYS

The withdrawal of the Trinity Biotech G6PD assay kit in 2017 caused great difficulty for participants. UK NEQAS Haematology has produced a field notice listing the alternative kits that we are aware of and this is available to download from the Documents section of our website (www.ukneqash.org). We still have a number of labs listed as using the Trinity kit; if in fact you have changed, could you update us with a quick email? This will help us keep our results and data analysis accurate and representative of your practice. *Duljeet Chohan*

Specialist Advisors to UK NEQAS Haematology

If you are interested in becoming an advisor to UK NEQAS Haematology, please contact the Scheme Director, Barbara De la Salle. We are particularly keen to recruit medical and scientific advisors with expertise in automated cell counting and haematology POCT.

RE-REGISTRATION QUERIES?
TEL +44 (0)1923 217878 OR EMAIL GHADMIN@UKNEQAS

ISO 17043 ACCREDITATION UPDATE

UK NEQAS Haematology and Transfusion had its regular surveillance visit in August 2017 and accumulated just twelve non-conformances across the whole service, all of which have been cleared. For the full scope of our accreditation : www.ukas.org.uk; Centre number 7805.

CHANGES TO ADLC AND NRBC COUNTING

Nucleated red cell counting will be amalgamated into the ADLC scheme as and when survey material becomes available for the different instrument groups. The first instrument users to benefit from this will be Beckman-Coulter users and we will update the relevant participants as the change goes live. Beckman-Coulter users receiving 'matrix E' will not need to register separately for NRBC, it will be available to all users in the group in as an additional parameter alongside the 5-population differential. We anticipate that suitable combined survey material will be rolled out in the next year or so for Sysmex and other instrument groups. The NRBC pilot will continue in the meantime, with the same scheme design, for Sysmex X-class users. The development of the survey material is beyond our control and we ask for your patience during the change. If you encounter any problems with data entry or have any other queries, please get in touch. *Yvonne John*

HAEMOGLOBINOPATHIES

The UK NEQAS Haematology Haemoglobinopathies suite of schemes has a significant and growing number of participants. Schemes available include sickle solubility testing, Hb fraction identification, quantitation and interpretation. Newborn screening is available with both dried blood spots and liquid whole blood specimens. The DNA scheme encompasses mutational analysis and interpretation. Last year saw the integration of the reporting of the newborn screening with liquid blood specimens into the Abnormal Haemoglobins scheme online. Newborn screening with liquid specimens is available as a separate registration to participants outside the UK. UK participants registering for liquid newborn screening must register as full participants in the Abnormal Haemoglobins scheme. *Duljeet Chohan*

THANKS TO OUR MORPHOLOGY CHAMPIONS

UK NEQAS Haematology is enormously grateful to our 'Morphology Champions', listed on the right, who have supplied us with a variety of samples which we have been able to use to add to our stock of blood films for our survey library. UK NEQAS Haematology distributes sixteen cases every year for the Blood Films for Morphology programme and these are prepared from clinical samples surplus to diagnostic testing and are provided by participant laboratories. When our expert morphology panel met this year they highly commended the range and quality of cases that had been donated. We still need cases and have a 'wishlist' for samples we would like to receive; the wishlist can be found on our website ('documents/newsletters'). If you think you might be able to supply a blood sample for the blood films scheme, contact Jon Sims (jon.sims@whht.nhs.uk) for further details. As a token of our appreciation for this support, we can offer participants a complementary registration for the annual participants' meeting or the digital morphology scheme. *Jon Sims*

Morphology Champions 2017

*Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Woolwich*

*Royal Berkshire Hospital
Reading*

*West Herts Hospitals
NHS Trust*

*Central Middlesex Hospital
London*

*Northwick Park Hospital
Harrow*

*St George's Hospital
Tooting*

*Royal Bournemouth
Hospital*

*Charing Cross Hospital
London*

*St Thomas' Hospital
London*

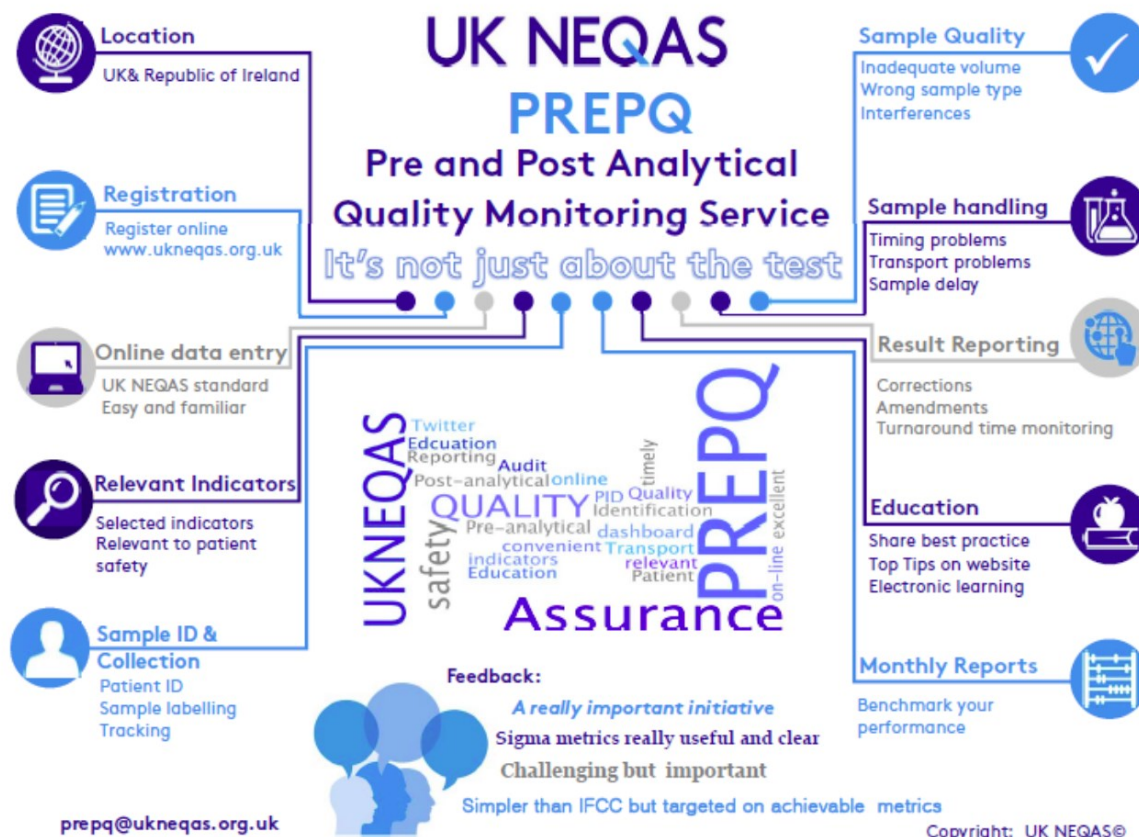
*Croydon University
Hospital*

*Royal Victoria Infirmary
Newcastle*

Thank you!

PRE AND POST ANALYTICAL QUALITY MONITORING: PREPQ

The pan-UK NEQAS pre and post analytical quality monitoring service (PREPQ) was launched in 2017 as a benefit of membership to registered participants. There is no charge for this service, which enables the laboratory to assess their incidence of adverse incidents against their peers using sigma metrics. The service has issued three exercises to date and had over 80 participants registered for the initial exercises. If you are interested in joining the service please email prepq@ukneqas.org.uk or complete the registration form at <http://birminghamquality.org.uk/prepq/sign-up/>.



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UK NEQAS CONSORTIUM NEWS

UK NEQAS Haematology is a member of the UK NEQAS Consortium and abides by the UK NEQAS Charity's Code of Practice. The charity has been active in many areas this year, the most notable being the launch of the new UK NEQAS Central website (www.ukneqas.org.uk) and the operation of the very successful first pan-UK NEQAS meeting in October 2017, for point-of-care-testing coordinators. The Charity also has elected a President Elect, Mr Liam Whitby, who will replace Dr Bill Egner as President of the organization in November 2018.