

UK NEQAS Haematology Newsletter Re-registration 2019-20

RE-REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

UK NEQAS Haematology re-registration opens on February 11th 2019 and will close on March 8th. Re-registration enables you to confirm your EQA requirements for the next participation year, update your contact details and provide us with a purchase order against which we can raise an invoice for the services provided. Our re-registration procedures are now entirely online and all communications are sent by email. Even if you have no changes to make, please take a few moments to review the tests for which you are registered and your registered contact details. It is essential that we have an up-to-date email address for each contact, especially the 'Main' contact so that we can keep you informed of services throughout the year. It is also important that we have the correct details for the 'Consultant' contact, as this is the person who will be contacted in the event of concerns about performance. The 'Consultant' contact may be the medical consultant responsible for the service, the Head of Department or person responsible for quality within the department. We will use your email address to inform you when distributions open, when reports are available and any changes to service. We will also contact you by email to discuss any problems with account management. With your permission, we will use your email address to notify you of questionnaires and services in Haematology and laboratory medicine that may be of interest to you. We do not share your email address with any non-UK NEQAS organization.

EQATE LAUNCHED

The new UK NEQAS Haematology EQATE digital platform was launched in October 2018 with the transfer of the Digital Morphology for CPD from the Digital Slidebox™ system. All participants have been successfully transferred to the new platform and we are grateful to everyone for their support and patience during the change. We will provide an extra case in this year's schedule as part of the beta testing of the new system. EQATE is planned to be more flexible and wide-ranging than Digital Slidebox™ and we will be adding extra modules to provide electronic EQA cases, interpretive cases, competency assessment and educational resources in the future. There will also be developments in the Digital Morphology for CPD programme that we were unable to make using the Digital Slidebox™ platform.

DR MITCHELL LEWIS

UK NEQAS was saddened to learn of the death of Dr Mitchell Lewis last summer. Dr Lewis established UK NEQAS Haematology in 1969 with a small grant for 3 years from the Nuffield foundation; at the time it was envisaged that it would take just 3 years' work to resolve the lack of interlaboratory comparability.....50 years later, EQA remains an essential component of quality management in laboratory medicine.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY
WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 9, 2019

**NATIONAL EXHIBITION
CENTRE
BIRMINGHAM**

**22ND ANNUAL
PARTICIPANTS' MEETING**

£115 (+VAT)

To register your interest:

haemysymposium@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 2019 applications is March 1st 2019; further information can be obtained from:

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



Carol Briggs (1958 - 2015)

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PILOT PROGRAMMES

UK NEQAS Haematology has launched 2 pilot programmes, which you can register for as part of your re-registration. The pilot programmes are not included in the scope of our accreditation to ISO17043 but will be submitted for accreditation once they are sufficiently well developed.

The **Glandular Fever Screening Test pilot EQA** has planned distributions in July 2019 and January 2020, each containing two specimens. Because of the anticipated interest in this programme, there will be a fee of £125 per laboratory for this year, to cover the cost of materials, postage and packing. The frequency of distribution will be assessed with participants during the year, once full online data entry and reporting has been developed. Initially, participants will be asked to return results online but separately from the main web-entry pages, as we work with our software provider to integrate the programme with our other services.

The **Pyruvate Kinase quantitative assay pilot EQA** has been added to our red cell enzymopathies suite, alongside the long-established G6PD programme. This is an international development that has the scientific support of the EuroBloodNet project. We plan for two distributions during the year, which will be planned around the availability of survey material. There is no charge for the PK pilot programme in this year.

Steering Committee and SAG Membership

*We welcomed
Dr Peter Carey and
Ms Nicki Lawrence
to the Morphology
SAG and Ms Edna
Young as Lay
Member to the
Steering
Committee.*

*We bade farewell,
with thanks, to:
Dr Barbara Wild
and Ms Mary Ann
Cameron*

*Dr Steve Keeney
became Special
SAG chair and Mr
Alun Roderick
General SAG chair.
We owe special
thanks to Mr Ian
Mellors, who stood
down as GSAG
chair.*

DNA DIAGNOSTICS SCORING CHANGES

The scoring for the DNA Diagnostics for the Haemoglobinopathies programme includes performance assessment for globin gene mutational analysis, interpretation, recommendations for follow up and use of the HGVS nomenclature. The performance assessment has been reviewed with our expert panel following feedback from participants and scoring for compliance with the recommendations and HGVS nomenclature in the model answer will in future be provided for information and advice only. Only the scoring for mutational analysis and interpretation will be included in cumulative scoring. Because there is a waiting list for this programme, any laboratory that fails to return for a full year will be asked to step down .

MANUAL RETIC COUNTING

Very few laboratories are now registered for manual reticulocyte counting. Although this module in the Retic counting programme remains just viable, we will review the future of this option again with our General Automated Counting Scientific Advisory Group in March. If you are still registered for manual, microscopic retic count, could you contact the Director (Barbara.delasalle@nhs.net) with your reasons and an indication of the impact the withdrawal of this option would have?

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 the last surveillance visit of our current cycle in August 2018 with just a couple of minor issues found. Our 2019 visit will be a full assessment. For the full scope of our accreditation : www.ukas.org.uk; Centre number 7805.

HAEMOGLOBIN A₂ AND S SCORING

Scoring for Hb A₂ and Hb S quantitation has for some time been assessed against the method trimmed means for HPLC or capillary electrophoresis, mainly for historical reasons arising from the earlier era of manual methods. This scoring approach has caused some anomalies in performance assessment between HPLC and capillary electrophoresis users, which we have dealt with by adopting the all methods trimmed mean as the target from August 2018. Evaluation of the change has shown no adverse impact on any group of participants and it will now be made a permanent feature. We will still provide both a method trimmed mean and a sub-method trimmed mean value (i.e. a value for an individual analyser model) for information. Sub-method trimmed mean values are only supplied where there is a minimum of twenty instruments registered for an individual analyser.

FAREWELL TO SBB CYTOCHEMISTRY EQA

Following consultation with our Morphology Scientific Advisory Group, the Sudan Black B / Myeloperoxidase module of the Cytochemistry programme will be withdrawn from April 2019. The number of participants registered for SBB staining has fallen over recent years as laboratories have changed to other, more effective, diagnostic methods. If any laboratory requires some alternative means of demonstrating interlaboratory comparability for this test, they should contact the Scheme Director and we will attempt to put you in touch with other participants who might be interested in arranging a specimen exchange programme. This change does not affect the Haemosiderin module (Iron Staining) and will allow use to devote time to improving the design of the Haemosiderin module and the cases distributed.

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, 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. 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.

Morphology Champions 2018

*Queen Elizabeth
Hospital Woolwich*

*Royal Berkshire
Hospital Reading*

*Central Middlesex
Hospital London*

*Charing Cross
Hospital London*

*Wythenshawe
Hospital, Manchester*

*Royal Free Hospital,
London*

*West Middlesex
Hospital, London*

*Whittington Hospital,
London*

*Royal Marsden
Hospital, Sutton*

*Manchester Royal
Infirmary, Manchester*

*West Herts Hospitals
NHS Trust, Watford*

Thank you!

UK NEQAS CHARITY NEWS

50 Years as World Leaders in EQA 1969–2019

Liam Whitby became the UK NEQAS Charity President in November 2019 after a year as President-Elect. Dr Bill Egner remains on the Board of Trustees as Past President.

This will be a memorable year for the organization as it celebrates its 50th anniversary as a world-leader in the provision of EQA services. As part of that celebration, UK NEQAS will attend the **EuroMedLab meeting in Barcelona** in May with an exhibition stand, contribute a breakfast and other sessions at the **IBMS meeting in Birmingham** in September and host a **pan-disciplinary meeting at The Helix in Dublin on November 5th**.



The Helix

UK NEQAS Pan-disciplinary Scientific Meeting 'The Patient Behind the Sample' Monday November 5th 2019

UK NEQAS Haematology is a member of the UK NEQAS Consortium and abides by the UK NEQAS Charity's Code of Practice.

UK NEQAS

Haematology and Transfusion

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UK NEQAS Haematology Staff Update

2018 saw Julia Mahesan return to a post at NHSBT and Vatsala Soni retire.

Sheetal Karunanandarajah joined us as Senior EQA scientist and we also welcomed Joana Loureiro and Alex Makin to the Haematology team. Gilbert Sakyi left our IT team after 3 years, for a post closer to home and will be replaced in the near future. Samira Nizam has joined us on a short term contract during her 'gap year' to assist with developing our office systems.

Thank you and welcome to all!

www.ukneqash.org