

## Forum Meeting II – Minutes Synopsis

The second Meeting of the Eurogentest Forum took place on 10/11 October 2005 in London.

All EQA Scheme organisers were present apart from the representatives of the German Haematological EQA. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

The Forum was given a brief re-iteration of the aims of the Eurogentest project and current EQA Schemes as well as an update on the status quo of the European Guidelines. A draft version of these Guidelines will be distributed to the Forum Members by end of November with the final version to be distributed at the next Forum Meeting in Amsterdam. It was agreed that these Guidelines should be reviewed every 3 years to keep them in line with technological development and that they would serve as a useful tool for countries drafting their own national Guidelines.

The overview of European EQA Schemes was finalised, the finished document will be published on the Eurogentest Website later in the year.

The Forum then moved on to discuss the way forward and harmonisation of the EQA schemes. The European Scheme will adhere to basic minimum standards and the accreditation of a scheme has to reflect the procedures and practices of the applying laboratory according to ISO15189.

This was followed by a more detailed discussion of the Draft Guidelines. The following points were agreed by the Forum:

- Anonymisation: Sample anonymisation was an adequate compliance with European law.
- Registration: No information about participation or performance would be given to third parties without the consent of the laboratory in question.
- EQA distributions: EQA distributions would consist of a random mix of normal/abnormal cases. It was recommended that EQA should include both analytical and interpretative assessment.
- Diagnostic services: EQA services should be broad so as to offer a wide spectrum to clients. Furthermore the meeting agreed that not all aspects of Cytogenetics could be covered due to the rarity of the disorder and lack of appropriate EQA material.
- Retro-/prospective: For the European EQA scheme, prospective EQA would be used. National schemes could use either retrospective or prospective or both.
- Assessors: It was agreed that assessors for the European Scheme should be senior scientists with 10 years experience and should be specialists in the EQA subject area they assess.  
There will be a mix of assessors from the field of participants.
- Performance criteria: Follow up of poor performance should depend on national legislation. This could include extra rounds or panel feedback. The UK process foresees immediate remedial action e.g. extra

- work is given immediately to ascertain if the lab in question is a persistent poor performer.
- Scoring system: There will be a comment in the report stating the level of performance (i.e. acceptable/satisfactory). Both the scoring system and the appeals procedure will be reviewed by the Forum on a regular basis.
- Appeals: This point will not be covered in the EQA Guidelines for the time being. It was decided that remedial action on poor performance will be left to national legislation and not be covered in the EQA Guidelines.
- Feedback: Feedback and comments from EQA laboratories will be raised either in an annual meeting or workshops.

The Czech and Polish Scheme co-ordinators should be invited to future Forum Meetings. The Forum then moved on to discussing the European EQA. It was agreed that the European EQA Scheme would be called CEQA (Cytogenetic European Quality Assessment) and that the pilot EQA should be web based. Phase one of CEQA will cover two constitutional cases, one pre and one postnatal. The reporting language will be English and the selection of laboratories will be based on suggestions by Forum members as well as some additional Eastern European laboratories. Phase 2 will be more open with phase 3 being accessible to all laboratories. The marking system for CEQA as well as the selection of assessors will be discussed at the next Forum meeting.

This was followed by a presentation by Olivia Wilcox, of Waypoint Systems, of the software they have developed for UKNEQAS for Clinical Cytogenetics.

The time and date for the next Forum Meeting were provisionally set for 9/10 May in Amsterdam, following the ESHG Conference.