CEQA Cytogenetic European Quality Assessment

EMQN The European Molecular Genetics Quality Network

Pilot EQA in Constitutional Molecular Karyotyping (Micoarrays / arrayCGH)

BACKGROUND

As part of a joint collaboration between CEQA and EMQN, we are offering a pilot EQA in Constitutional molecular karyotyping (Micoarrays/arrayCGH) in 2009. To participate in this pilot scheme please register for the EQA from your respective website www.ceqa-cyto.eu (Cytogenetic labs) and www.emqn.org.uk (Molecular Genetics labs). The pilot is free of charge although if you haven't registered with either CEQA or EMQN before there is a small annual administration fee to join.

It is possible that in the longer term this will form part of our usual repertoire of EQA services and as such we hope to learn as much from running this scheme as possible. At the same time we hope that you will appreciate this opportunity to test out your protocols and have your reports peer reviewed.

The pilot EQA will be restricted to 30 participants. We wish to enrol a representative number (10) of labs for each platform (BAC, Oligo and SNP). Hence, following registration we will ask you to complete a short questionnaire so a wide range of laboratories can be selected for this initial pilot. The staff at CEQA and EMQN will make a decision on which labs will participate in the practical part of the scheme. This decision will be based on the results of the questionnaire and our need to ensure that we pilot the EQA on each platform type used.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

For the purposes of this year's pilot scheme we are intending to distribute 1 DNA sample. The samples will have been extracted using a standardised protocol but labs should be aware that they need to clean up the sample to meet the needs of their procedures.

We will ask you to test the samples and report the results in your usual format.

Whilst we intend to score reports in the same way as in a normal round of EQA (using a combined Cytogenetic/Molecular scoring approach) as this is a pilot scheme we will not be defining acceptable standards or acting on poor performance. In this way we hope to maximise the educational value to both you as participants and ourselves as EQA providers.

TIMETABLE

The scheme timetable is dictated by the availability of suitable material. At present we intend to distribute the samples during the first week in July 2009. The samples will be distributed by courier and you will be asked to complete your analysis and issue a report back to EMQN within 8 weeks.

When the practical component of the scheme is complete the returns will be marked by assessors (including both molecular and cytogenetic specialists) and a final report will be distributed to all participants as soon as possible.

RETURNS

For the purposes of this pilot scheme we will monitor the accuracy of the results and also the quality of the clinical reports issued. We would therefore ask that all results are reported according to your usual laboratory reporting procedures. Unfortunately, we can only accept reports written in English.

FEEDBACK

A feedback questionnaire will be made available to all participants after completion of the EQA. We would ask that you fill this in – any additional feedback you can give will be very gratefully appreciated.

Thank you in advance for participating in this scheme.

Ros Hastings and Simon Patton
CEQA & EMQN co-ordinators