



JCTLM Meeting, Sevres, 14th/15th November 2005



Constitution • Objectives • Activities

Jonathan Middle (UK)
on behalf of the EQALM Board

History

In 1989, the EU BCR (Bureau Communautaire de Référence) organized a first meeting between EQAS organizers involved in biochemistry and endocrinology. This group started work in January 1990 with EQANews and with informal meetings at international and national congresses.

Under the initiative of Adam Uldall (Denmark) several Working Groups were created, which published 9 papers in the European Journal of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. These papers are trend-setting publications in the field of clinical chemistry EQAS. They were also published as the February issue of EQANews in 2000; where more details of the early history of EQA-collaboration may be found.

The informal collaboration between European EQAS organizers was formalized in 1996 in Pont à Mousson (France) having the inaugural meeting with the foundation of EQALM (European committee for External Quality Assessment Programmes Laboratory Medicine). This is an umbrella organisation for European EQA organizers.

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Adopted at the 2003 Barcelona meeting

1. Full Members of EQALM are non-profit organisations (which can appoint individuals) for External Quality Assurance - EQAssurance - programs in laboratory medicine, which have national or substantial regional coverage in European countries (as defined by WHO). They have a strong liaison with the medical laboratory profession by including them in their steering committee or board.
2. EQA organisations from outside of Europe may be admitted to membership at the discretion of the Board. EQALM may accept individuals interested in external quality assessment/assurance as individual members and organisations (either commercial or international) conducting EQA schemes as Associate Members. The Board may also invite individuals to become Honorary Members in recognition of their contribution to the field of EQA or service to EQALM.

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3. EQALM provides a forum for co-operation and exchange of knowledge about quality-related matters especially with regard to external quality assessment/assurance programs. It may establish projects on topics of common interest according to an agreed work program approved by the General Assembly. Examples of ways of co-operating are :
- Organising meetings with scientific or practical themes for members and other interested parties
 - Establishing working groups to address scientific matters.
 - Issuing scientific publications, including books.
 - Issuing news sheets, or editing a section of EQAnews or other journal(s)
 - Developing EQA projects
 - Compiling Internet resources

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4. EQALM intends to obtain recognition from European scientific associations within laboratory medicine and with national and international organisations of the diagnostic industry.
5. EQALM will meet minimum once a year. One of these meetings will serve as a General Assembly and shall be convened by mail three months in advance.
6. EQALM will appoint at its General Assembly through a simple majority of votes amongst those full members present, a Chairman, a Secretary a Treasurer and two members for a three-year period of office. The mandate is renewable for a maximum of one new period. The Board will:-
 - keep a register of existing members and approve new members,
 - review the membership by evaluation of the statutes of members once every three year.
 - keep the membership informed of its activities by mail and other appropriate means, and make an
 - annual report at the General Assembly.

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7. EQALM will charge a membership fee to cover the cost of secretarial work, mailing and telephone charges. It may also request money from grant-awarding institutions for agreed purposes).
8. If EQALM is wound up, its assets will be employed to realize the same purposes as set out in these statutes.
9. Revised statutes must be submitted to and approved by the general assembly.
10. The legal domicile of EQALM is situated in Geneva, Switzerland.

Closed Working Groups

Working Group A on Analytical Goals in Laboratory Medicine

Baadenhuijsen H, Fraser CG, Libeer JC, Petersen PH, Ricos C, Stockl D, Thienpont L.

Working Group B on Reference materials and Reference Methods

Franzini C, Kratochvila J, Middle J, Ricos C, Siekmann L, Stockl D, Thienpont LM

Working Group C on Materials for EQA

Libeer JC, Malakhov V, Middle JG, Penttila I

EQAnews (see www.eqalm.org.uk)

EQAnews provides information on quality assurance in the medical laboratory; Clinical Biochemistry, Clinical Immunology, Clinical Microbiology, Clinical Parasitology, Clinical Virology, Haematology, Coagulation and Haemostasis etc. EQAnews is published quarterly.

EQAnews regards Quality Assurance (QA) as a professional activity which improves the quality of service provided by the clinical laboratory.

EQAnews sees External Quality Assessment as a rapidly developing scientific and practical field where world wide understanding and support for further development is essential. EQAnews is established to facilitate world wide communication of scientific, organizational and practical aspects of EQA.

EQAnews is sponsored by IFCC and owned by the European Committee for External Quality Assurance Programs in Laboratory Medicine, EQALM, which, together with the IFCC, will ensure contact with the various disciplines of Laboratory Medicine.

The Editor of EQAnews is [Gitte M Henriksen](#) (DK)

Selected Working Group A/B/C Publications

Libeer JC, Baadenhuijsen H, Fraser CG, Petersen PH, Ricos C, Stockl D, Thienpont L.

Characterization and classification of external quality assessment schemes (EQA) according to objectives such as evaluation of method and participant bias and standard deviation. External Quality Assessment (EQA) **Working Group A** on Analytical Goals in Laboratory Medicine.

Eur J Clin Chem Clin Biochem. 1996 Aug;34(8):665-78.

Stockl D, Franzini C, Kratochvila J, Middle J, Ricos C, Siekmann L, Thienpont LM.

Analytical specifications of reference methods compilation and critical discussion (from the members of the European EQA-Organizers **Working Group B**).

Eur J Clin Chem Clin Biochem. 1996 Apr;34(4):319-37

Middle JG, Libeer JC, Malakhov V, Penttila I

Characterisation and evaluation of external quality assessment scheme serum. Discussion paper from the European External Quality Assessment (EQA) Organisers **Working Group C**.

Clin Chem Lab Med. 1998 Feb;36(2):119-30.

Current Active Working Groups

WG on Hematology (blood smears)

Elaboration of a practical guideline for the preparation of blood smear samples for EQA

Convener: Joan-Luis Vives Corrons (jlvives@medicina.ub.es)

Document part I (Introduction, scheme design, process description): final state

Document part II (preparation of survey, collection of results, reporting): 1st draft

WG on Hematology (cell counting)

Elaboration of a practical guideline for the preparation of EQA samples for cell counting.

Convenor: Sverre Sandberg (sverre.sandberg@haukeland.no)

Results of the questionnaire are available (see lecture EQALM 2003)

WG on Hemostasis

Elaboration of a practical guideline for the preparation of EQA samples for hemostasis.

Convenor: Piet Meyer (p.meyer@pg.tno.nl)

WG on Nomenclature

Convener: Gunnar Nordin (gunnar.nordin@equalis.se)

WG on Microbiology

Questionnaire on microbiology schemes J-C Libeer & A. Deom

Symposia & General Assemblies

- In collaboration with the IFCC Committee on Analytical Quality, EQALM has organized several scientific meetings:
- Symposia at the IFCC Congress in London (1996) and Florence (1999)
- A "PT workshop" was organised in collaboration with EUROLAB in Boras (Sweden) in September 2000.
- In 2001, EQALM organized a post-congress symposium at the Euromedlab congress in Prague.
- Each year an EQALM General Assembly meeting is organized:

1996: Düsseldorf (Germany)
1997: Versailles (France)
1998: Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic)
1999: Florence (Italy)
2000: Boras (Sweden)

2001: Prague (Czech Republic)
2002: Paris (France)
2003: Barcelona (Spain)
2004: Vienna (Austria)
2005: Rome (Italy)

Involvement with standard setting & Education

Standards for use in EQA-organisations

ILAC-G13 : 2000 Guidelines for the requirements for the competence of Providers of Proficiency Testing Schemes.

ISO/IEC Guide 43-1: 1997(E) Proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons Part 1: Development and operation of proficiency testing schemes.

ISO/DIS 13528 : 2002(E) Statistical methods for use in proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons.

CEN/TC 140 N 525 In vitro diagnostic medical devices.

IFCC

Fundamentals for EQA

<http://www.ifcc.org/divisions/EMD/Documents/Fundamentals-for-EQA.pdf>

Guidelines for the Requirements for the Competence of EQAP organizers in Medical laboratories.

Education and Management <http://www.ifcc.org/divisions/EMD/default.asp>

Repository for education <http://www.ifcc.org/divisions/EMD/Repository/Default.htm>

Support for the work of JCTLM

- EQA organisations are in a unique position to probe the state of the art of laboratory investigations, continuously and in real time. They contribute to the vigilance element of the IVDD
- Not only is analytical performance assessed, but aspects of pre- and post-analytical performance (including interpretation of results) may be examined, thus providing information on the whole investigation process
- The data provided by EQA enables customer laboratories to make rational choices on methodology, and manufacturers to make necessary improvements in quality, so as better to meet clinical need
- Reference methods and reference materials may be used by EQA service providers to under-pin the target values used for performance assessment, and provide a benchmark against which field methods may be assessed
- In this respect, EQA service providers are major stakeholders in the work of JCTLM and support its aims and objectives

Contact Details

Board of EQALM:

Chairman : Jean-Claude Libeer (B)

Secretary : Gunnar Nordin (SE)

Treasurer : André Deom (CH)

Editor of EQAnews : Gitte M. Henriksen (DK)

Working Groups Representative : Jonathan Middle (UK)

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or visit www.eqalm.org