Washington State Department of Health
ELABORATIONS
News and Issues for Washington's Clinical Laboratories

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Ungraded Proficiency Testing Results

Proficiency testing (PT) is the testing of unknown samples sent to a laboratory by a PT program approved by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). After performing and submitting its test results, the laboratory receives results that are compared with other laboratories performing the same test.

Occasionally the laboratory will receive results that are not graded. The most common reasons for ungraded results are:

- Late submission
- A submission sent to the provider without results
- An incorrect instrument is listed
- Erroneous characters are submitted (such as sym bols: <, >, =)
- There is no consensus among peers
- There is no consensus among referees
- Educational samples

Most PT providers use exception codes (letters, numbers, and/or symbols) that alert the laboratory that the result for an analyte was not graded. When this occurs, the laboratory will receive results with an artificial score of 100 percent, but the laboratory must verify the accuracy and performance of the testing by grading the result manually. The laboratory will use PT provider's summary data booklet to assist in the self-evaluation of the ungraded result(s) and document the score, statistical evaluation (if applicable) and corrective action taken for failures, shifts, drifts and trends.

Once the ungraded results have been assessed and corrective action is taken, the report should be reviewed by the medical director for the laboratory and maintained with the proficiency testing records for at least two years.

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Inside This Issue

Practice Guidelines

The following practice guidelines have been developed by the Clinical Laboratory Advisory Council. They can be accessed at the LQA website.

Acute Diarrhea
Anemia
ANA
Bioterrorism Event Mgmt
Bleeding Disorders
Chlamydia
Diabetes
Group A Strep Pharyngitis
Group B Streptococcus
Hepatitis
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Infectious Diarrhea
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Point-of-Care Testing
PSA
Rash Illness
Red Cell Transfusion
Renal Disease
STD
Thyroid
Tuberculosis
Urinalysis
Wellness

Proficiency Testing Review Compliance Tips

Proficiency testing (PT) is the testing of unknown samples sent to a laboratory by a PT program approved by the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). After performing and submitting its test results, the laboratory receives results that are compared with other laboratories performing the same test.

At minimum, the report should be reviewed for the following items:

- Accuracy (correct site, correct test, correct sub mission result)
- Statistics such as SD and SDI
- Shifts – suddenly upward or downward from the mean
- Drifts – the results move in one direction over time
- Trends – the results move upward or downward, and the results may cross the mean
- Bias – the results may be above or below the mean for two events or more
- Ungraded results
- Failures: 60 percent or lower
- Failures: 80 percent or lower (ABO/Rh and com patibility testing)

When finding errors or failures, these points may assist you in determining the cause of the failure:

- Review the instrument reports versus the submit ted results for clerical errors
- Review special instructions for performing the proficiency testing (were the tests run in the correct mode, is there a possibility of dilution errors, is a calculation required, etc.)
- Ensure that your instrument and reagents are ac curate on your report
- Review the units of measure
- Review the decimal place
- Was the procedure followed?
- Have the testing personnel been trained in per forming the test and how to perform proficiency testing?
- Was the PT kit stored correctly?
- Was the PT material mixed and/or diluted cor rectly?
- Review the quality control data for the day the PT was performed
- Review the quality control peer group data if ap plicable
- Review maintenance logs and temperature logs
- Review service reports if applicable
- Review most recent calibration if applicable
- Review the other PT scores for shifts, drifts and trends

Finally, further corrective action may include the following:

Repeat the testing if the material is still viable
Request off schedule PT material
Perform precision and accuracy testing with a reference laboratory
Calibration
Performing maintenance or service if necessary

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Website access:
Department of Health
Laboratory Quality Assurance
Public Health Laboratories

27th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference (Virtual Edition)

November 9, 2020

Calendar of Events

Training Classes:

27th Annual Clinical Laboratory Conference:Virtual Edition

November 9

Contact information for the events listed above can be found on page 2. The Calendar of Events is a list of upcoming conferences, deadlines, and other dates of interest to the clinical laboratory community. If you have events that you would like to have included, please mail them to ELABORATIONS at the address on page 2. Information must be received at least one month before the scheduled event. The editor reserves the right to make final decisions on inclusion.

Washington State Department of Health

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