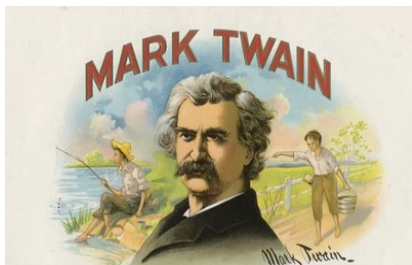


Lies, Damn Lies and Laboratory Results...



...to misquote the American writer Mark Twain, who made famous the remark "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." Does your practice laboratory produce accurate results? Could you prove it?

NWL invest a great deal of time and effort to make sure that results produced in our laboratories are accurate and both the Leeds and Poulton sites hold accreditation under ISO 17025.

For practice labs, regular quality control testing that is carried out alongside patient sample analyses provides a vital indicator of whether your results are trustworthy. QC results should be recorded and compared over time to identify any drift. However, section 7.5 of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme states:

"In addition to internal procedures, quality assurance by reference to external laboratories or samples must be routinely undertaken and results documented."

Quality assessment (QA) compares results from your practice laboratory with those generated by an independent reference lab and also those produced by other practice laboratories using the same analyser. It is a measure of the accuracy of your results and how closely they match results obtained by others.

NWL Poulton offer a totally independent External Quality Assessment (EQA) scheme, suitable for all practices and covering a wide range of analysers, assuring both the quality and consistency of results generated in your practice.

For chemistry assessment, a liquid sample is sent out on a monthly basis for practices to test for a specified range of parameters. Haematology assessment comprises the participants submitting an EDTA blood sample, which they have already tested, to NWL Poulton each month for analysis. Monthly reports are generated from the submitted data including group mean and standard deviations for each analyte, plus Z-scores for participants, where appropriate. The cost for chemistry EQA is just £15.00 + VAT per month and for haematology and chemistry only £23.00 + VAT.

For more details contact Kate Simister at Poulton on 01253 881035.

Screening for Strangles



NWL Leeds has recently had an increased number of equine nasal swabs from which *Streptococcus equi ssp equi* has been isolated. When sampling to screen for strangles a single negative culture result cannot be taken as evidence of freedom from infection and it is important to adequately sample the back of the pharynx. The Horse Race Betting Levy Board guidelines on strangles state that three nasopharyngeal swabs should be taken at 5 -7 day intervals over a two week period.

Endoscopic examination of the guttural pouches and culture of guttural pouch washes is an alternative diagnostic technique for the identification of carriers.

NWL Clin Path Club

The next North West region meeting is at 8.00 pm at the Preston Hotel on 07 Jul 08.

Sarah Ambler will speak on Dermatology.

Refreshments will be served from 7.30 pm. Contact Kate Simister for further details.