

Newsletter

Spring 2010



Dear Colleagues,

There are a number of changes taking place in our EQA schemes and the website which we want to tell you about. We also want to bring you up to date with our progress towards accreditation for ERNDIM. This is going to be an increasingly important issue since organisations responsible for laboratory accreditation encourage, and may eventually insist, that EQA is only provided by accredited organisations.

New Schemes

Two new schemes have been made available this year following successful two year pilot phases:

1. Sialotransferins being organised by Dr Dirk Lefeber, Nijmegen
2. Lysosomal enzymes being organised by Dr Otto van Diggelen, Rotterdam

We would like to apologise to laboratories that subscribed to the transferrin scheme but did not yet receive material for the first distribution. This occurred because the scheme proved to be more popular than we had anticipated. However the scheme organisers are providing additional material and it should be distributed very soon.

Website for DPT results entry

The system for entry of the DPT results by the web site, which was developed together with the CSCQ (Geneva) has now been satisfactorily tested and is available for use for the DPT schemes in 2010. Participants will be contacted and offered the chance to practice input of results using their data from the 2009 samples. It is envisaged that entry will be possible using the same password as that used for the quantitative schemes. We hope all participants will find the transfer to this new method of data submission to be profitable and will support our efforts towards the development of a modern, traceable input and reporting system which is an essential step towards our accreditation.

Update on resources available from our ERNDIM website

The laboratory directory: Participants that are already registered are requested to update their information. Other participants are strongly encouraged to apply to join the directory (go to <http://www.erndim.org/> → directory of laboratories → participants etc.).

Newly added documents in 2009:

Travel grant reports (see Training and Education)

Speakers Presentations from the ERNDIM meeting held in Basel, October 22-23, 2009 (Meetings and Reports).

Pilot Schemes

ERNDIM is constantly reviewing the profile of schemes offered to participants and intends to fill gaps in provision where this is feasible.

There is one pilot scheme in progress this year. It is for urine mucopolysaccharides and is being organised by Drs Huijmans and Ruijter, Rotterdam, The first distributions are being circulated Spring 2010. For further information please contact: metab.CL15@erasmusmc.nl

Urine Samples for DPT distributions

We would very much like to encourage urine donations from participating laboratories. We will pay transport costs and award a 20% discount for the participation fees in the DPT of the following year for laboratories that send acceptable samples. If are able to donate a sample(s) please contact Camilla: Camilla.Reed@sch.nhs.uk

Training Days and Scientific Meeting October 2009

ERNDIM collaborated with ETAC, the education and training committee of the SSIEM to organise a two day training meeting (the presentations are available to SSIEM members on the SSIEM website under "Training → SSIEM Academy"). This was held in Basel during the week beginning October 19th. This was followed by a one and a half day ERNDIM scientific/clinical meeting together with the ERNDIM DPT participants meetings (presentations available on the ERNDIM website under "Meetings and Reports). Both meetings were very successful, the training days were oversubscribed. There were 106 participants in total, 12 clinical delegates and 27 laboratory delegates stayed on from the training meeting for the ERNDIM meeting. The Executive would like to thank Prof Brian Fowler and Katerina Honegger for the excellent organisation provided.

SSIEM Academy 2010

ERNDIM is collaborating again in the organisation of this year's training meeting. It will be a two day meeting held in Manchester UK on 6th and 7th October. Further details will be made available through the SSIEM.

ERNDIM participants meeting 2010

This will be a half day event held on the first day of the SSIEM conference as usual. This year that will be Tuesday 31st August in Istanbul. Further details will be circulated nearer the time.

Accreditation of ERNDIM

Malcolm Heron will retire this year. Therefore ERNDIM needs to find a way to replace the administrative functions that he has provided for us. The Executive also wants to take the opportunity to establish an office structure that will facilitate the organisation becoming accredited. We all acknowledge that this will be an essential requirement for EQA providers in the years to come. We are negotiating with the Manchester Hospital that hosts the sister organisation, EMQN (European Molecular Quality Network). One of the key principles is that ERNDIM must remain independent and retain the ability to relocate its office if it so chooses. We are close to an agreement that will involve ERNDIM financing a new post of a scientific administrator to be located in the EMQN office. This postholder will also spend 40% of their time working for ERNDIM and ETAC organising training events and resources. The SSIEM have

agreed to fund 20% of the salary. To achieve this ERNDIM increased the participation fees of the schemes by 40 euro this year.

The EuroGenTest Project

The Eurogentest project has now been extended by six months to the end of June 2010. Remaining funds will be used towards holding a final National Representatives meeting in Lyon on the 21st April 2010

The main topic of this meeting will be to finalize guidelines for the provision of BGT services in European countries. A draft document is available on the ERNDIM website (http://www.erndim.unibas.ch/Meeting_Rep/08_may_basel/Report_%20Nat_Rep_Meeting.pdf). If you have any comments or suggestions on this topic please forward them to your National Representative in time for the meeting.

Ongoing activities within the project include: provision of guidelines for performance assessment in our proficiency EQA schemes; linking analytes in the ERNDIM laboratory directory to diseases in the Orphanet directory; producing a report on current practice in amino acid analysis; steps towards achieving accreditation, carrying out best practice meetings; producing recommendations for purine & pyrimidine analysis and for acyl carnitine analysis.

An application from some members of the Eurogentest consortium including ERNDIM for a continuation of the project as Eurogentest2 has been made. This is on a much smaller scale than the original Eurogentest project but nevertheless contains about 15 work packages including EQA, organization and accreditation, assessing and improving performance. Main activities will include meetings, expert meetings and pilot schemes. A second work package will focus on control materials. We hope to hear whether the application has been successful in by April 2010.

European Society for Human Genetics Quality Committee

ERNDIM is represented at this important European Committee. Its aims are to improve and maintain high quality of genetic services across Europe and to provide an annual report of its activities. Although there are specific problems in each of the 3 laboratory branches of genetics (i.e. cytogenetics, biochemical genetics and molecular genetics) many issues are common and are briefly discussed here. These include definition and harmonization of poor performance and persistent poor performance in all EQA Schemes, requirement of the absence of a critical error for laboratories that perform well, and development modalities to help the persistent poor performers by organizing site visits supported by the respective Schemes. The Quality Committee collaborates with Orphanet on the databases and on revision of the International Classification of Diseases.

We hope that 2010 will be a good one for you all.

Best wishes,
The ERNDIM Executive Committee