

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (EQA) A PIVOT OF LABORATORY MEDICINE.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

External Quality Assurance (EQA) is one of many processes used to ensure the analytical quality of laboratory measurements therefore Uganda Martyrs Hospital Laboratory Lubaga has undertaken this measure to guarantee quality results. In an EQA scheme, analysis of identical specimens at many laboratories is done, and results are submitted by individual participants. Results are assessed and compared either against a target value assigned by the organizing or reference laboratory or more often assessed against the consensus value (“trimmed mean value”) derived from all results submitted by participants for a particular analyte. As laboratory science advances toward global health, it’s crucial that the laboratory enrolls in an EQA scheme for the harmonization of laboratory medicine approach globally, analytical proactiveness, and a requirement for accreditation. Laboratories that don’t participate in EQA don’t get a chance of assessing the integrity of their entire sample process and neither are accredited hence no regional or international recognition.

2. OBJECTIVES:

This abstract, therefore, aims at publicizing the role of EQA in laboratory medicine.

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3. METHODS:

Overall EQA performance data were analyzed alongside the accreditation pursue the process of this laboratory. The accreditation pursue process lasted for 5 years from 2017 to 2021. After this period, the laboratory was accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) in 2021. A retrospective data analysis of the EQA performance for that duration was done.

4. RESULTS:

5. CONCLUSIONS:

Although Uganda has been able to cover some analytes on EQA schemes, it’s paramount however that the schemes widen the test base to cover all analytes. Comparison with other laboratories makes a big stride towards harmonizing laboratory medicine in Uganda and the data generated can give a platform for creating Ugandan-based biological references.

6. RECOMMENDATION:

The laboratory fraternity needs more sensitization on the relevance of External Quality Assessments.

Human Quality Assessment Services (HuQAS) a Kenyan-based scheme is the principal EQA scheme for this laboratory making it expensive in terms of cost therefore there is a need in Uganda to widen the test base of her schemes such that

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Table 1: The annual overall EQA performance for this laboratory was as follows:

RESULTS

YEAR	ANNUAL SCORE IN PERCENTAGE
2017	44
2018	50
2019	86
2020	87
2021	92

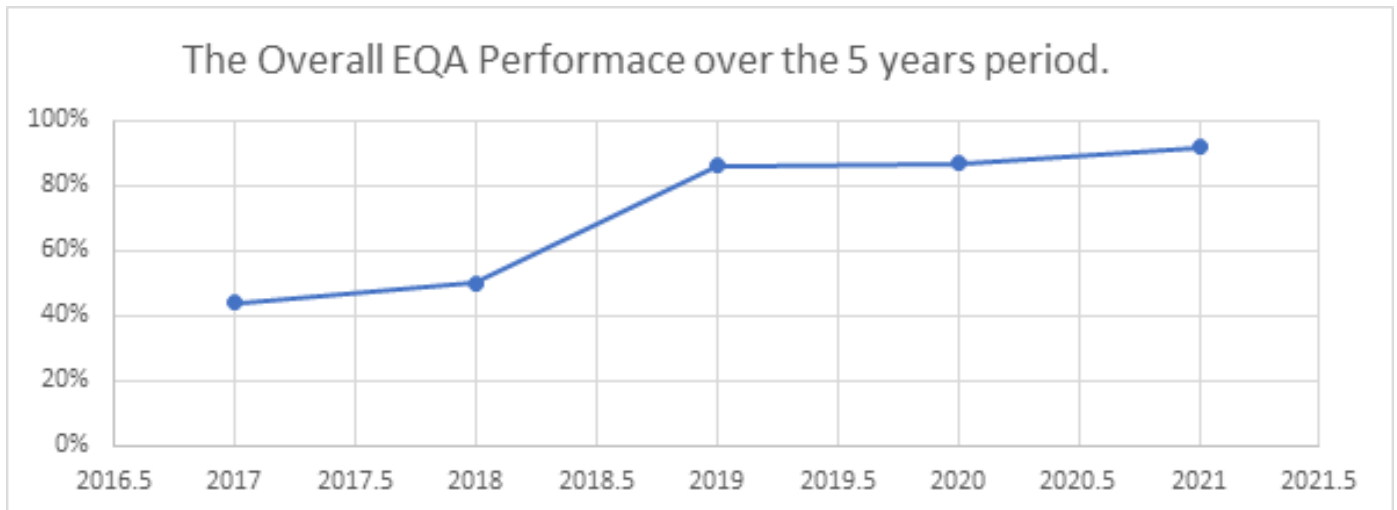


Figure 1: This has revealed a positive correlation between EQA performance and the degree of Quality Management Systems for this laboratory.

laboratories can subscribe thus minimizing expenses on external EQA schemes.

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