

WORKING GROUP: POST-ANALYTICAL PHASE (WG-POST)

Background:

Clinical knowledge and skills combined with laboratory expertise are needed for optimal interpretation of laboratory results in the setting of the individual patient. Increasing number of studies emphasise the need for improving the clinical utilisation of laboratory tests and that laboratory professionals should play a more prominent in this optimization process. A spectrum of activities have been identified that assist clinicians in translating a certain laboratory result to diagnostic information but all too little is known about how these activities are practiced in laboratories.

Terms of reference:

WG-POST is a joint working group of EFLM and the European Organisation for External Quality Assurance Providers in Laboratory Medicine (EQALM). WG-POST intends to support laboratories in taking a more active role in supporting a better clinical utilisation of laboratory tests by pursuing the following activities:

1. Development and organisation of surveys and external quality assurance (EQA) programs focusing on laboratory and/or clinical activities that can improve clinical utilisation of laboratory test results.

Surveys and EQA programs of WG-POST aim to investigate 1. post-analytical activities of laboratory staff including reflex- reflective testing, validation of results by medical technologists or interpretation by laboratory specialists 2. ways of post-post-analytical utilisation of different laboratory tests in clinical decision making by physicians that are attached to laboratories by test requesting and 3. existing approaches to improve the adequacy of test requesting in specific clinical situations using assistance of laboratory staff in the pre-pre-analytical phase. Both general investigations of above activities of laboratory professionals and physicians as well as investigations focusing on clinical and laboratory evaluations of a specific laboratory test are of interests to the WG-POST. The principal methodological approach of the WG-POST is based on electronic questionnaires: first a clinical situation is presented (case histories are given) either with laboratory tests results playing crucial role in the investigated clinical decision making or these results should be gathered by participants with measuring the distributed samples and finally questions on the investigated extra-analytical activities of the participants are provided.

2. To use the results of the surveys and external quality assurance programs in the process of continued professional development of clinicians and laboratory professionals alike.

WG-POST provides feedback reports of each survey to the participants. The reports summarise the main findings of each survey and also provide summary of the recent literature and guideline recommendations of the investigated practice.

Deliverables:

- A scientific paper and a feedback report on each project.
- Presentations of the surveys on national and international conferences and training courses.