External Quality Assessment (EQA) - Proficiency Testing (PT) in Developing Countries Medical Laboratory Field

Sibongile Zimuto

Eurachem 8th Workshop – Proficiency Testing Analytical Chemistry, Microbiology, and Laboratory Medicine
Berlin, Germany, 6th to 9th October 2014

Presentation Outline

- Overview of ZINQAP
- Background
- PT / EQA Practices
- Challenges
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Questions
Zimbabwe

- Located in Southern Africa
- Population of 12 million
- World Heritage Sites
  - Victoria Fall
  - Great Zimbabwe Monument

Overview of ZINQAP

**ZINQAP** – Zimbabwe National Quality Assurance Programme

**Mandate**

Assist medical laboratories and testing sites attain and maintain quality

**Governance**

- Non-profit stakeholder governed organisation
Strategies

• Accredited PT Service
  – 2005, SANAS.
• Training & mentorship
• SADC Regional Centre of Excellence – Quality Systems
  – Support QA initiatives in SADC MS

Background

• Laboratory testing key component of Health delivery system

• Laboratories in the developing countries face numerous challenges
  – High disease burden
  – Ever increasing demand for testing services
  – Limited resources
  – Limited quality and technical infrastructure
Importance of Strengthening Laboratory Technical Capacity in Africa

• Political commitment and support for strengthening laboratories in Africa
  – Maputo declaration: 2006
  – Launch of the Africa Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM): 2011

Quality Systems in Developing Countries

• Increased implementation QS in developing countries
  – World Health Organisation AFRO initiative
  – Various development partners
  – Various tools
    • SLMTA
    • WHO

• Laboratory audit
  – SLIPTA

• Increased demand for PTS
Increased Awareness of QS

- Increased awareness and demand for PT Services
  - ISO 15189; ISO 17025 – PT/ILC Requirements
  - Good laboratory practice
  - Initiatives from National Programmes
Forms of EQA

• Proficiency Testing
• Re-testing / Rechecking
• On-site Evaluation

Developing Countries

• High, Medium and Low income
• Quality systems at different levels of development
• High Income Emerging Markets
  – Well established
• Medium and Low Income
  – Minimum QS infrastructure
PT/EQA Services in Emerging Markets

- PT/ EQA is well established
- Local PT Providers
  - Accreditation to ISO 17043
  - Wide range of PT schemes – covering different forms of testing
- Good appreciation of PT/EQA
  - Importance / value
  - Participation
  - Review of participation and implementation of CA

PT / EQA in Medium to Low Income Developing Countries

- PT/EQA is less developed
- Lower appreciation of PT/EQA and its value
- Fewer local PT service Provider
- Reliance on External PT Service Providers
- Alternative forms of EQA used
  - Blinded re-testing / re-checking
  - On-site evaluation
Challenges

- Limited appreciation of the value of QS, PT / EQA
- Unavailability of local PT Programme
- The cost of the PT Programme
  - Competing demands for resources
- Challenges in running a PTS
  - PT design
  - Access to homogenous sample
  - Transportation services
  - Data analysis and reporting software/systems
Recommendations

• Need to build local capacity in QS and PTS
  – Disease surveillance
  – Support of the Health Delivery System
• Urgent need to identify funding for laboratory system strengthening and QS, PT...
• Develop and implement regulatory mechanisms enforcing, QS, PT

Conclusion

Need to improve the quality of laboratory services, PTS and contribute to a Healthy, Happy, population
QUESTIONS

THANK YOU