International Consortium
for Harmonization of Clinical Laboratory Results

EQALM
European Organisation For External Quality Assurance Providers in Laboratory Medicine

Terms of Reference for the working group: Description of Methods Used by EQA Poviders.

A working group under the joint task force to monitor harmonization of measurands in laboratory medicine through data aggregation (HALMA)

The purpose of this document is to clarify the terms of reference including tasks and purpose of the working group (WG) on description of methods used by EQA organizers.

Background

The European Organization for External Quality Assurance Providers in Laboratory Medicine (EQALM) and the International Consortium for Harmonization of Clinical Laboratory Results (ICHCLR) have joint task force to monitor harmonization of measurands in laboratory medicine through data aggregation (the HALMA task force).

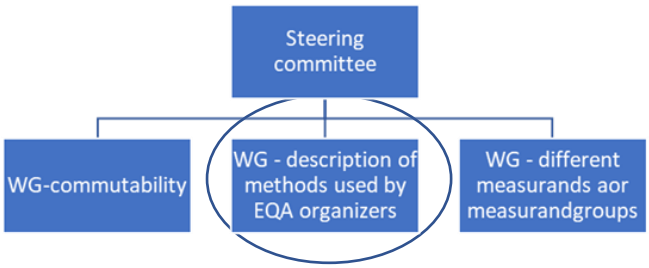
Purpose of HALMA

The primary purpose is to assess harmonization of the IVD industry through aggregated EQA data for different measurands on an international basis. Harmonization will be assessed by providing information on differences between peer group target values of measurement procedures and a true value, or between peer group target values when no true value is available.

Organizational structure of HALMA

The HALMA task force will be led by a steering committee and will have specific working groups for dedicated tasks including the WG on description of methods used by EQA organizers.

The working groups are established with a chair who is responsible to organize the work and a group of dedicated experts (people with expertise and experience in the topic). The chair is appointed by the steering committee.



The circle indicates that these terms of reference are for this working group.

Tasks and purpose of the working group

Members

Members of the working group are appointed by the chair of the working group.

Tasks and purpose

The main purpose of this WG is to define the minimum information needed to collect data that provides the ability to aggregate results from different EQA providers and create useful outputs.

Tasks for the WG:

- Define information to be collected from participants about their measuring system for each measurand to enable suitable description and/or classification into homogeneous groups for which EQA data from measuring systems will be representative of performance for a stated measurement procedure.
- Investigate what is achievable and what EQA providers can and are willing to provide (pragmatic list). Assess the field and communicate with EQA providers.
- The WG should deal with practical implementation.

The WG should work closely together with the different measurand WG's in terms of discussion about the description of methods and defining measurement procedures. There will also be a close collaboration with the EQA central database project from EQALM to define metadata needed to classify EQA data from different measurement procedures.

Useful knowledge

Feasibility project

Useful knowledge on desirable information to be collected from participants to enable EQA data to be suitably aggregated among different EQA schemes can be found in the feasibility project

(Feasibility for aggregation of commutable external quality assessment results to evaluate metrological traceability and agreement among results. Clin Chem Lab Med 2021; 59: 117-25).

Measurement procedure, definition by VIM
(International Vocabulary of Metrology–Basic and General Concepts and Associated Terms. 3rd edition, JCGM (Joint Committee for Guides in Metrology) 200:2008

2.6 (2.5*) measurement procedure*
detailed description of a measurement according to one or more measurement principles and to a given measurement method, based on a measurement model and including any calculation to obtain a measurement result

NOTE 1 A measurement procedure is usually documented in sufficient detail to enable an operator to perform a measurement.
NOTE 2 A measurement procedure can include a statement concerning a target measurement uncertainty. NOTE 3 A measurement procedure is sometimes called a standard operating procedure, abbreviated SOP.

Publications

Publications from the WG must be reviewed and approved by the steering committee before submission.