Department of Health & Human Services

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Interpreting Your Scores

As we continue the process of improving the Syphilis Proficiency Testing program, the method of scoring and assigning grades has also been revised. With this new grading system, each participating laboratory will get one overall score based on a weighted average of the tests performed. As before, participants will be graded on their performance of a particular testing procedure as it compares to the performance of the same procedure by reference laboratories. Results from consensus labs will also be used in assigning scores. Scores will be assigned based on the following criteria:

- Qualitative Accuracy
- Quantitative Accuracy
- Reproducibility

As an incentive to report results as you would in a clinical setting, we are also awarding points for completely filling out the Syphilis Proficiency Testing Results Form and for returning results in a timely manner.

Treponemal Tests

All samples will have a maximum of 18% each. If the lab gives an incorrect qualitative result, then a score of 0% will be given for that particular test. Therefore, the maximum score a laboratory can get for correctly reporting results on the 5 samples tested will be 90%. An additional 5% will be awarded if the results form is completely filled out, including the following:

- Person performing test
- Manufacturer
- Expiration Date
- Lot Number
- Date Tested
- Laboratory Address/ Email

We have put this in place to encourage laboratories to treat the PT samples as they would patient samples, and provide all relevant testing data. Good Laboratory Practices should apply in every aspect of the laboratory.

An additional 5% will be awarded to laboratories that return results within 30 days of the sample ship date. We have improved the mode of shipment of all the items leaving the CDC and will provide labs with tracking numbers and invoices prior to them leaving the CDC. For countries facing problems receiving international packages (customs/ permit problems), or availability of reagents, please contact the CDC Syphilis Team (syphiliswhopt@cdc.gov) as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Non-treponemal Tests

Non-treponemal tests should be qualitatively and quantitatively reported. For non-paired samples (three specimens), a maximum of 20% will be given each. If the lab is within one dilution of the reference/ consensus labs, then 10% will be given instead of the maximum 20%. For paired samples (two specimens) a maximum of 15% will be awarded each. If a laboratory is within one dilution of the reference/ consensus labs, 7.5% will be awarded for each paired sample. No points will be given if the lab is outside of one dilution or if qualitatively incorrect. As with the treponemal tests, the maximum score a laboratory can get for correctly reporting results on the 5 samples tested will be 90%. An additional 5% will be awarded if the results form is completely filled out and an additional 5% if returned within 30 days of the ship date.

Each participant's graded report will include:

- Participant results
- Reference lab results
- Consensus lab (80% of participants) results
- Score for each individual test
- Score Key
- Overall average score of participant

Because this is a new system of grading, every participant has been awarded an additional 10% to their score for the June 2014 shipments.

Acceptable performance on a particular test is a score of 80% or greater. In an effort to encourage laboratories to be proficient in both treponemal and non-treponemal tests, participants who complete or perform both a treponemal and non-treponemal test throughout the year and maintain an average of 90% or better will be recognized with a certificate of achievement for that year.

Thank you for your continued participation as we improve the program.

The CDC Syphilis Team

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
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