

# Overcoming EQA Challenges - A Subscriber's perspective

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# Presentation outline

- Challenges and solutions
  - Lack of communication
  - Troubleshooting and corrective action
  - Root cause analysis
  - Panel challenges
  - EQA reports
  - Does not cover entire spectrum of examination phases
  - Lack of reagents and equipment breakdown
  - Equipment maintenance and calibration
  - Does not cover entire range of examinations in the menu
  - Staff attitude
  - Intervention support
- National integrated EQA strategy

# Lack of Communication

## Overcoming the Challenges:

- Hold briefing meetings-agenda( include pre and post EQA activities) and meetings schedule
- Create annual EQA schedule on management calendar
- Update contact details
- Use of system alerts via email
- Embrace use of social media for example whatsapp

# Troubleshooting and Corrective action

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Lack of procedure for review of feedback
  - Develop policy and procedure and train staff
- Lack of knowledge on conducting CA
  - Offer training and mentorship
- Lack of reviewing CA for effectiveness
  - Analysis for trends etc
  - Implement lessons learnt in Continual improvement
- Non involvement of other personnel in troubleshooting
  - Convene joint feedback meetings involving relevant staff

# Root cause analysis

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Lack of procedure for conducting RCA- develop procedure and policy
- Lack of knowledge on conducting RCA-
  - Offer training on RCA, on the bench mentorship
- Superficial RCA process-
  - ensure an all inclusive, in-depth process , learn from past corrective action(effectiveness or lack of )
  - Analysis and presentation in meetings and implemented as continual improvement
- Non involvement of personnel in conducting RCA
  - Section meetings involving staff
- Non documentation of RCA-
  - Create document templates

# Panels

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Poor quality material
- Damaged panels
- Delayed delivery
- Panels without handling instructions
- Panels not in line with national /WHO standards- for example blood smear for malaria parasites stained using different method
  - Liaising with EQA provider
  - Require providers to substantially meet requirements of ISO 17043

# Reports

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Format not in line with guidelines for example National, WHO guidelines for example malaria and TB microscopy
  - Communication with EQA providers
- Complex format- graphs and numbers that do not make sense
  - Mandatory training by provider before commencement of EQA
  - In house training and on bench mentorship
- Reports not utilized in improvement
  - Compile EQA performance data
- Delayed or even no feedback

# Spectrum, equipment and reagents

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Does not cover entire spectrum of examination phases
  - Perform sample split and inter-laboratory sharing with peers in close proximity( for example share unstained blood slides)
- Lack of reagents and equipment breakdown
  - Budgeting, service schedules
- Equipment maintenance and calibration
  - Budgeting, service schedules, calibration schedules
- Does not cover entire range of examinations in the menu/mostly donor funded /expensive
  - Innovative approaches like sample split
  - Share EQA material
  - Budgeting and sensitization of decision makers
  - Utilization of internal quality control programs



# Staff attitude

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Training
- Develop EQA rotation schedules to encourage ownership
- Include EQA performance in staff recognition- discourage punitive action in case of unsatisfactory results
- Encourage teamwork in feedback review
- Analyze samples the same way as patient samples( review and authorization
- Responsibility-appoint key person
- EQA as a learning process- share lessons in CME
- Develop understanding that EQA is not a magic bullet

# Lack of Intervention support

## *Overcoming the Challenges:*

- Fragmented EQA programs due to lack of a comprehensive national EQA program
- Lack of intervention support from supervisors
  - County and facility QA committee( formation and strengthening)
  - Sharing of performance data with county and local partners
  - Lobby for investments by the county government
  - Hold EQA stakeholder meetings( regional and national)

# National EQA integration strategy

- **Objective 1: Implement a well-coordinated and integrated national EQA system to support laboratory quality improvement processes**
  - Strategy 1: Strengthen existing administrative structures and systems to support national and county EQA programmes
  - Strategy 2: Establish in-country capacity for PT panel production and or acquisition.
  - Strategy 3: Delivery of PT panels to participating laboratories and return of reports
  - Strategy 4: Provide coordination and networking of integrated EQA services at national and county levels
- **Objective 2: Establish mechanisms to increase EQA participation, response, and improve performance**
  - Strategy 1: Institute measures to improve EQA response rate, turnaround time and performance
  - Strategy 2: Institute measures to increase number of enrolled laboratories
  - Strategy 3: Conduct annual assessments to evaluate laboratory infrastructure, logistics and technical capabilities
- **Objective 3: Establish an integrated laboratory M&E system for EQA**
- **Objective 4: Strengthen Operational Research to inform the national EQA programme**
  - Strategy 1: Establish supportive mechanisms for operational research Activities:
  - Strategy 2: Develop a communication strategy guide to support EQA activities

THANK YOU