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Oral Session

An update on malaria

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT SCHEME FOR THE MOLECULAR DIAGNOSIS OF MALARIA

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Molecular diagnosis of malaria has entered clinical practice in Europe. However, a comparative evaluation of published real-time PCR assays for *Plasmodium falciparum* showed 6 out of 7 assays to have a higher limit of detection (ie lower sensitivity) than that published (Alemaheyu S *et al. Malaria Journal* 2013, 12:277). There is also evidence of variation in detection sensitivity for the same method undertaken in different laboratories (Proux S *et al. Malaria Journal* 2011, 10:323). Objective: To address this deficiency to and ensure greater uniformity of performance and promote quality improvement. Methods: UK NEQAS has developed an external quality assessment scheme which is in its pre-pilot phase. All species of human malaria are represented and specimens are suitable for quantitative and qualitative PCR. Results: Specimen formats, content and scoring systems. Conclusion: EQA for the molecular diagnosis of malaria is now available.