

Patient Information Sheet

Thank you for considering the donation of some extra blood or urine to allow us to check the quality of the laboratory tests used for the diagnosis, monitoring and management of various diseases.

The External Quality Assessment (EQA) Unit at the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals is run by UK NEQAS for Immunology, Immunochemistry & Allergy, part of the UK National External Quality Assurance Service, which ensures the continuing quality of laboratory tests and their use in the UK, and also in parts of Europe. This is done by anonymously distributing small quantities of real patient samples for testing to see if each laboratory performs the test reliably and accurately and gives the proper result.

Our reports are freely available to doctors and laboratories in the NHS and are an important part to ensure that standards of patient care are maintained and improved. To do all of this we need to use voluntary donations from real patients (urine, blood and plasmaphoresis material).

“Why have I been asked to take part?”

You have a relevant medical condition, which means that your samples can be used in our tests. Your doctor has given permission for us to approach you, to ask you to consider making a donation if you wish to do so. Your samples can be used to determine whether performance in laboratories is satisfactory and whether there are any flaws in the test methods, which make them unreliable or unsafe for use in the diagnosis of patients. The assessments are intended to ensure that the tests used in the NHS perform safely and satisfactorily to help hospitals and GPs provide patients with the highest standards of care, and to ensure that standards are maintained and improved year on year. If you decide not to donate it will not affect your current or future medical care, and you are under no obligation to take part.

“What will it involve?”

If you agree to participate you can donate an extra sample of blood or urine, or allow us to use the waste plasmaphoresis material from your procedure. Your sample will be anonymised and will be stored until required for use. The samples will be tested for viruses and other infections prior to distribution, to ensure that they are safe and meet the relevant legislation, but these results cannot be traced back to you, if positive, since the donor's identity will be unknown at that point.

“What if I change my mind?”

You are free to withdraw your consent within 48 hours of sample collection and we will destroy it. After this time period your sample will be anonymised. Once a sample has been anonymised it will not actually be possible to identify it again to remove it from the programme.

“What will happen to the information from the EQA Programme?”

All information will remain confidential and be held securely while in our care. We will destroy the record of your identity after the initial 48 hours quarantine period, but will retain clinical details such as age, sex, diagnosis and any other-identifiable information, which is needed for the laboratory to perform the test properly. UK NEQAS for Immunology, Immunochemistry & Allergy does not distribute any information, which allows a sample to be traced back to an individual patient. Information such as age, sex and diagnosis or medical clues to the diagnosis will be made available if these would normally be required to perform the test. Results will not be traceable to individual patients.

“What if I have further questions?”

You should contact the Donations Team on 0114 2715715

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Sheffield Teaching Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust