Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

EQA scheme for endoscope rinse water

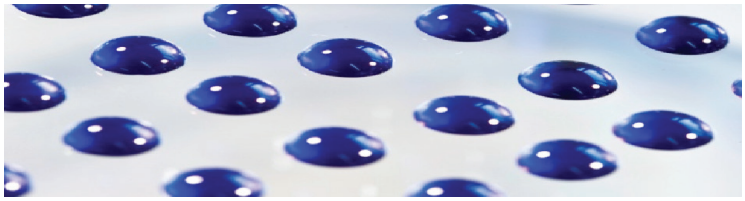
Does your laboratory test endoscope rinse waters?

If so, you may be interested to know that the food and environmental proficiency testing unit (FEPTU) provides an external quality assessment (EQA) scheme for laboratories testing endoscope rinse waters. Participating in an EQA scheme is an effective tool to help laboratories assure themselves that they report the correct results. This scheme is accredited to the international standard: 'ISO/IEC 17043:2010 Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing'.

Endoscope rinse water scheme

This scheme provides EQA samples to challenge the enumeration of micro-organisms in endoscope rinse waters and the interpretation of those results.

The 'Choice framework for local policy and procedures 01-06 – decontamination of flexible endoscope: testing methods', recommends that total viable counts (TVC) should be made on the final rinse water. This is because the most significant problem associated with the use of automatic endoscope re-processors is contaminated rinse water that comes into contact with the endoscope after the disinfection process.



Lenticule discs provide a means of preserving bacteria. They consist of control-dried cultures of viable micro-organisms that require storage at -20°C.

Scheme features:

- the samples are provided in the PHE's unique lenticule disc format
- three distributions of two samples per year
- each sample requires a TVC as recommended by the choice framework (28–32°C for five days per 100mL)
- specific request for the detection of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*
- proven stable, homogeneous samples prepared and tested by qualified microbiologists
- interpretation of test results is presented in reports
- on-line reporting available
- informative, educational and timely reports
- easy-to-follow statistic and scoring systems
- total confidentiality of performance
- individual continuous performance assessment reports provided
- accreditation awarded by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)
- for further information about the endoscope rinse water scheme please contact us by email on foodeqa@phe.gov.uk or by telephone +44 208 327 7119

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www.gov.uk/government/collections/external-quality-assessment-eqa-and-proficiency-testing-pt-for-food-water-and-environmental-microbiology

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