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 whatsup
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