Welcome to the latest edition of the Temple Street Children’s University Hospital Department of Clinical Pathology Newsletter, published every 6 months to update you on our service.

Pathology and the New Paediatric Hospital:
In conjunction with colleagues across all Dublin paediatric hospitals, TSCUH Pathology has begun defining future service provision at the NPH which is to be based on the St. James’ Hospital site.
We see this as a great opportunity to develop our service; our vision and goals are driven by the needs of the patients and service users. In the coming years we will be working to ensure that a dedicated and identifiable Paediatric Laboratory Service, using state of the art equipment & techniques and staffed by the highest calibre paediatric laboratory professionals, will become an integral part of the NPH.

Pneumatic tube system:
Over 5,500 carriers have been sent to the laboratories since August, with Phlebotomy (2,330, 37%) followed by A&E (1,945, 31%) the highest volume users. The pneumatic tube system has proven very successful with no downtime so far and a positive impact on specimen delivery with an average transit time of less than one minute.

New request forms:
• We have redesigned some of our Pathology request forms to better suit the needs of the service and those of our users. These will be distributed shortly and used instead of any older versions that you may have, which should be discarded. Blood Transfusion forms are currently under review and a new version will be issued in early 2014.
• Please call the laboratory office to resupply forms. GP forms from other hospitals must not be used.
• We have ongoing problems with illegible and incomplete request forms. Requests not fulfilling the requirements listed in the User Manual cannot be accepted. Please ensure that all relevant patient and clinical details are completed and legible.

Quality Assurance & Accreditation:
Congratulations to Blood Transfusion staff on receiving no non-conformances during their annual assessment in October by INAB to ISO 15189 standards, which are for medical laboratories, and the AML BB standards specifically for Blood Transfusion & Haemovigilance.
This year all other departments were also assessed by INAB to the ISO 15189, replacing CPA UK accreditation in line with EU legislation taking effect at the end of the year. The National Newborn Bloodspot Screening Laboratory also had no non-conformances, which is a fantastic achievement for the first time being assessed to these standards. All the other laboratories only received minor non-conformances which will be easily resolved meaning all areas will receive INAB accreditation.

User Survey:
In November we distributed our annual user survey to all our in-house users and GPs. We would like to encourage you to complete this survey and let us know what aspects of our service we can improve or just to let us know if we are getting it right! This also helps us with our accreditation assessments, where we can show that we responding to your needs. Invites for the annual user meeting will be sent early 2014 and we encourage you to attend.

Biochemistry:
Full clinical information and reason for request MUST be provided on ALL requests for complex biochemical and metabolic investigations; these are required to provide an interpretative comment. Investigations referred to outside laboratories are very costly (£50 - €4,000) and should only be sent following with approval of your Consultant.

Haematology & Blood Transfusion:
The new British Committee for Standards in Haematology guidelines on pre-transfusion testing (Milkins et al, 2013) make a key recommendation that ‘a second sample should be requested for confirmation of the ABO group of a first time patient prior to transfusion’. This practice is already in place in other countries and in other hospitals in Ireland. Its chief aim is to minimize ABO incompatible transfusions resulting from errors such as wrong blood in tube (WBIT), which, according to international surveys, occurs with a frequency of about 1 in 2000 samples taken (Dzik et al 2003). We will implement this recommendation in Temple Street and OLCHC shortly. Procedures will be put in place, so that this does not impede the delivery of urgent red cells or other components. For emergency transfusion, all patients will be treated as group O until the required second sample is obtained.

REFERENCES
The National HealthLink Project provides a web-based messaging service which allows the secure transmission of clinical patient information in real time, including pathology results, between Hospitals, Health Care Agencies and GPs. HealthLink is gradually being rolled out to all our GPs and the chart (right) shows the number of connections to TSCUH Pathology made so far. If you would like to be prioritised for connection, please email your request to: deirdre.deverell@cuh.ie.

When completing a laboratory request form please ensure that the date and time of specimen collection is recorded. If a patient is providing the sample away from the surgery they need to be instructed to fill in these details. Failure to have an entry in this field is causing a problem with result transmission to some GP practice systems. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

The Irish Meningitis and Meningococcal Reference Laboratory (IMMRL) was established at TSCUH in 1998. It is the National Reference Laboratory and provides a service relating to the diagnosis and monitoring of infections caused by Neisseria meningitidis (below left), Streptococcus pneumonia, Haemophilus influenzae and Group B streptococci. Testing is performed using PCR (polymerase chain reaction) based assays which is a highly sensitive technique based on extracted DNA from numerous sample types including CSF, EDTA whole blood and various body fluids.

2013 was a very busy year for staff in the IMMRL as two new methods of automated DNA extraction were introduced and validated for use. The equipment acquired for this purpose include the QIA Symphony (below right) and the EZ1 Advanced XL machines. These automated methods will help to maintain our current same day sample turnaround time while allowing time to develop new assays which will improve and broaden the IMMRL service.

If you would like to visit or find out more about the IMMRL, please email claire.mcguinness@cuh.ie.

New equipment:
Funding has been secured for a new interface between our blood culture analyser and the laboratory information system. This interface will greatly reduce the time to notify users of blood culture results, allowing prompt clinical decisions and discharge.

Pathology User Manual:
- The Pathology User Manual is currently being reviewed and Edition 7 will be available electronically to our users in early 2014 on the pathology pages of the TSCUH intranet and at www.cuh.ie.
- In order to allow more frequent updates, the next and subsequent editions will only be available electronically.
- Any comments, suggestions or information you would like to see in the User Manual should be sent to the Quality Manager at the email address below.

Staff Achievements: Congratulations to………
- Caroline Murray, MLS Metabolic Laboratory, who was awarded the inaugural medal for the best oral case presentation at the ACBI annual conference.
- Mo Radiom, Anatomical Pathology Technician, who achieved first class Honours in the APT Cert Exam this year and was awarded the prestigious Maggin Award by the Royal Society for Public Health, UK.
- Dr Christine Shilling, SpR Histopathology, who was awarded Best Poster Prize at the Paediatric Pathology Society annual conference in St Petersburg.

Other news:
- Thanks to everybody for supporting our Cake Sale held for LauraLynn in October. You helped raise €1,000 and this amount will cover the cost of over 30 hours of respite for children & their families who need it, so please be assured your support has made a real difference. Many thanks, for more information please visit http://www.lauralynn.ie/lauralynn-house.html
- Our Laboratory Manager, Mr Martin Stearn, has resigned to take up a new role as an accreditation assessor and be closer to his family in the UK. His organisational skills have managed to maintain the high standards in the Department. He will be greatly missed and we wish him all the best in the future.

Quick requests:
- On-call service users are reminded that this is for emergency samples only. Non-emergency samples must not be sent.
- Helicobacter antibody has been replaced by faecal antigen testing. Please only send faecal samples for this investigation.

What would you like to see in your newsletter? Please contact us with queries or requests. Next edition: June 2014

Contact details: (external users, for a direct line please prefix the extension number with: 01 879)
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Clinical Director: Dr Robert Cunney Ext. 4693
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Quality Manager: Ms Darina Merlehan Ext. 4588

do we have your up to date details? Please email any changes to the Quality Manager