

Consultation on the draft accreditation decision to accredit the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV

RESPONSE SUBMITTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR GENERAL MICROBIOLOGY

3 December 2010

Introduction

The Society for General Microbiology (SGM), founded in 1945, is an independent learned and professional scientific body dedicated to promoting modern microbial science. It has established itself as one of the two major societies in its field globally, with some 5,000 members in the UK and abroad. Further information about SGM is provided in Appendix 1.

Comments on the draft accreditation decision

The SGM supports this accreditation decision. The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) is an internationally recognized and respected professional organization in the field of sexual health and HIV. Their guidelines are clinically relevant and useful to clinicians, microbiologists and public health physicians. Protocols are good at linking clinical presentation to laboratory methodology.

The BASHH guideline production process complies with each of the 25 accreditation criteria specified by the NHS Evidence Accreditation Scheme. Furthermore BASHH has its own process manual for the production of guidelines, and it appears that their guideline production processes are thorough and rigorous. Previous experience of BASHH guidelines has shown them to be always relevant, comprehensive, well-written and informative.

A single concern would be that if guidelines spend too long in draft format they risk losing relevance as testing technology changes. For example, there are now dual target assays for chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

Sources

This response was prepared from written evidence supplied by Dr Kate Templeton, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and Dr Katie Jeffery, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford.

Appendix 1

The Society for General Microbiology (SGM) was founded in 1944/1945 and is now the largest microbiological society in Europe. It has over 4500 individual members of whom 75% are resident in the UK. The remainder are located in more than 60 countries throughout the world. Almost all full members are qualified to doctoral or higher level; there are 1000 postgraduate student members. More than 700 schools and a number of companies are corporate members.

The Society provides a common meeting ground for scientists working in academic centres and in a number of fields with applications in microbiology (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmaceuticals, numerous industries, agriculture, food and beverages, the environment and education). The majority of Society members are employees of universities, research institutes, health services, government agencies and small to multinational companies.

The science of microbiology covers a great diversity of life forms: disease-related molecular structures such as prions and viruses, archaea, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and algae. Microbes are of crucial importance in a number of processes affecting all life on Earth: the cause and control of disease, fertility of soils and aquatic environments, fermentation, biodegradation of waste materials and dead biomass, bioprocessing steps in drug and antibiotic production, and molecular biotechnology.

The Society's objective is to advance the art and science of microbiology. It does this by:

- Organizing regular scientific meetings at centres throughout the UK and abroad, where microbiologists meet to hear and discuss the latest research findings. The largest meetings last 4 days and involve up to 1400 participants.
- Publishing four major international learned journals: *Microbiology*, *Journal of General Virology*, *Journal of Medical Microbiology* and *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology*. The journals are available on-line through HighWire Press (<http://www.sgmjournals.org>).
- Representing the science and profession of microbiology to government and the media. The Society is represented on a number of biological and biomedical committees and organizations, in the UK and internationally, thereby exerting influence on science policy and education, regulatory affairs and international collaboration.
- Promoting microbiology as a career for young people, by increasing awareness of microbiology in schools and aiding the development of teaching

resources. The Society also provides grants for young scientists to attend scientific meetings and training courses.

- Keeping members informed of current developments in professional and scientific matters in microbiology, through publication of the magazine *Microbiology Today* and other means.

The Society is a Charity registered in England and Wales (No. 264017) and in Scotland (No. SC039250) and a Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales (No. 1039582). It is governed by a Council drawn and elected from the membership. The Society employs a staff of over 30 at its headquarters.

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