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**Italian National External Quality Assessment: IMMUNOSurvey EQA-IS**

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IMMUNOSurvey is an External Quality Assessment programme for Immunoassay Schemes (EQA-IS) provided by Medical Systems SpA, a 25 years old leading Italian diagnostic distributor with a certified quality system (UNI EN ISO 9002 and UNI CEI EN 46002) and member of EQALM (European Committee for External Quality Assessment Programmes in Laboratory Medicine). IMMUNOSurvey schemes are operated in partial compliance with ISO/IEC Guide 43-1:1997 and ILAC-G13:2000 guidelines and are registered in the EPTIS database (European Proficiency Testing Information System: <http://www.eptis.bam.de/>). IMMUNOSurvey schemes have been performed regularly since 1997 with primary educational aims (1). Participation in the schemes is open for any medical laboratory on a not-for-profit voluntary basis with no participation fees for Italian participants. More than 540 laboratories participate in the IMMUNOSurvey schemes for Fertility, Thyroid, Oncology, Metabolism, Prenatal risk, ToRCH & H.pylori serology, Allergy, Immuno-haematology, Hepatitis B markers, Myocardial markers. Additional schemes will be soon implemented. Participants receive a manual describing schemes, with working instructions for operations and for handling of controls. Four times a year per each scheme a couple of human sample controls produced by Care Srl is distributed to participants for testing around 100 analytes or investigations. Confidentiality of individual participants' results and performance is maintained and guaranteed. A report about each participant distribution outcome and a yearly summary report with the assessment for a satisfactory participation, containing statistics and graphics referred to both all participants and users of the same method, are printed. An open discussion forum between provider and participants takes place once a year and the programme includes schemes philosophy, objectives, performance scoring system and reports interpretation. IT applications for participants are also planned on the IMMUNOSurvey schemes website: <http://www.veq.it>

(1) Maggio et al. J Clin Ligand Assay 1998 (Italian Edition);21:83-99.

(2) Melegari et al. Biochim Clin 2001. 25;2:160, 044.

(3) Piu et al. Biochim Clin 2001. 25;2:183, 089.