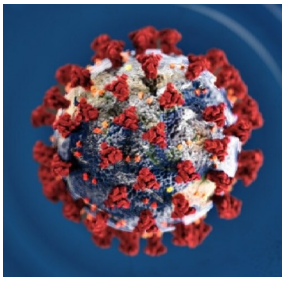
ICOVEQAS



International COVID-19

External Quality Assurance Scheme

Web-Page: www.mendelcenter.org/icoveqas

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The International COVID-19 External Quality Assurance Scheme announces that the following laboratory had **excellent results in the scheme:**

1. Dr Vassiliki Michou, Locus Medicus, Cholargos, 15561 Athens, Greece.

Until now ICOVEQAS has 15 member laboratories from 5 countries. Participants are assessed for their ability to:

(a) Test samples by a molecular method (RT-PCR) and find a correct result for the presence or absence of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. The first round included samples similar to those used for routine screening of low risk patients (nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs and/or RNA from them) as well as a sample of sputum and samples similar to the supernatant of a bronchoalveolar lavage, which are more difficult samples that an expert laboratory should test from patients with symptoms of lower respiratory tract infection such as a productive cough.

(b) To correctly interpret their results and provide a consultation service to their clients, which include the patients themselves and their clinicians. It should be noted that most methods use at least 2 separate molecular targets for detection of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material (RNA) and when only one of the targets is positive and the other negative then the laboratory may have to perform additional testing of the same or a new sample in order to unequivocally determine the correct result: on some occasions this may be due to the presence of another virus namely SARS, on other occasions this may be due to the presence of a low viral load of SARS-CoV-2. Laboratories also have to run additional control reactions to determine that each step in the procedure is performed adequately, in

particular they usually run a control reaction for the RNAseP gene, a human gene the presence of which shows that adequate RNA was isolated from the sample.

When more participating laboratories meet the ICOVEQAS requirements for excellent performance in finding correct results in their Molecular test for COVID-19 and correctly interpreting their results these will be announced. At a later stage when Antibody tests for COVID-19 will become more widespread, ICOVEQAS intends to deliver an External Quality Assurance Scheme for these tests too.