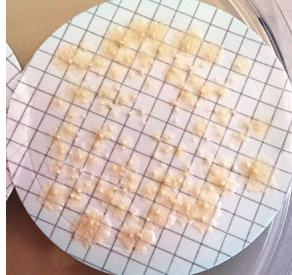


Mycobacterium spp. in Water Scheme

**Unrivalled experts as a PT provider -
giving you confidence in your test results**



This unique microbiology scheme provides proficiency testing (PT) samples to laboratories that examine endoscope rinse and heater cooler unit (HCU) waters for *Mycobacterium* spp. This scheme challenges the detection, accurate enumeration and identification of this organism from these hospital water samples.

HCUs are used during open heart surgeries to warm or cool a patient as part of their care. It has recently been recognised that there is the potential for *Mycobacterium chimaera* or other species to grow in a water tank in the HCU. When the water evaporates, the mycobacteria may become dispersed into the environment as aerosols and may infect a patient during certain types of open heart surgery.

Flexible endoscopes are complex reusable instruments that require unique consideration with respect to decontamination. Their external surfaces and internal channels for air, water, aspiration and accessories are all potentially exposed to body fluids and other contaminants. Environmental non-pathogenic mycobacteria present a particular problem when they occur in the final rinse-water of some instruments used for diagnosis.

This PT scheme helps you to identify gaps in your processes, highlighting where quality improvements can be made. It also provides an opportunity to improve staffs knowledge and experience with organisms not frequently encountered.

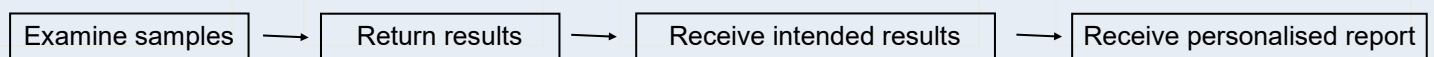
The scheme focuses on raising awareness of:

- the variation of different methods and media used and highlighting subsequent impact on PT results
- interpreting the microbiological results obtained
- the importance of testing *Mycobacterium* spp. and highlighting the difficulties associated with isolating this organism

Four distributions available per year, each containing two samples

Two distributions for Endoscope rinse water

Two distributions for Heater cooler water



Your laboratory's personalised report will contain information such as:

- the contents and the levels of the sample
- performance data for each examination for you to compare your performance against other laboratories
- your on-going performance over a year which demonstrates your commitment to quality to clients and colleagues
- where relevant actions to take to ensure that your laboratory retains high standards of testing
- educational information on difficult and challenging samples

For your investigation repeat samples are provided free of charge and further expertise can be provided by our panel of renowned food and water microbiologists

Satisfactory performance with your PT provides assurance that your laboratory is

Contact the Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit:

Tel: +44(0)20 8327 7119 email: foodega@ukhsa.gov.uk

Assisting laboratories world wide in maintaining standards of excellence



Food, water and environmental laboratories play a vital role in protecting the public's health by helping to ensure that food is safe to consume, waters are safe to drink and that environmental and recreational waters do not make people ill.

Proficiency testing or external quality assessment provides laboratories with an independent external assessment of their performance. Regular participation in proficiency testing schemes is an important part of laboratories quality procedures and helps to ensure that the results of their tests are accurate.

With over 35 years of experience, UK Health Security Agency's Food and Environmental Proficiency Testing Unit is a world leader in providing microbiology proficiency testing schemes to food, water and environmental laboratories both in the UK and in over 70 countries internationally.

Our dedicated team of experts has unrivalled professional, scientific and technical expertise in proficiency testing. Participants also have the additional advantage of drawing on the full scientific resources of UK Health Security Agency.

Benefits of participating in UK Health Security Agency's food and water proficiency testing schemes:

- unique schemes provided based on current legislation
- inclusion of organisms such as *Mycobacterium* spp. in endoscope and cardiac cooler waters
- free of charge repeat samples
- access to expert food and water microbiologists
- bespoke schemes reports provided
- UKHSA and z-scores provided in some scheme reports
- ability to make extremely low level samples
- on-going performance assessment in the reports
- samples provided in easy to use LENTICULE® discs
- samples provided in easy to use formats

PT Schemes available include:

Environmental Swab
European Food Microbiology Legislation
Standard Scheme
Non-Pathogen
Norovirus and Hepatitis A virus*
Pathogenic *Vibrio*
Shellfish
Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*
Staphylococcus aureus enterotoxin
Bottled and Mineral Water
Dialysis Water
Drinking Water
Endoscope Rinse Water
Hospital Tap Water
Legionella Isolation
Legionella Molecular
Recreational and Surface Water
Mycobacterium spp. in Water
Wastewater*

**Most schemes are accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)
to the international standard ISO/IEC 17043:2023 *not accredited**