



The Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine

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Statement from the Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine regarding Cervical Screening (8/5/2018).

The Academy of Clinical Science and Laboratory Medicine (the Academy) wishes to offer heartfelt sympathies to those affected by the current cervical screening tragedy.

This statement is intended to both clarify for the public the quality assurance that exists in clinical laboratories in Ireland and to ensure that trust is restored in screening programmes.

- The Academy offers any necessary assistance to the Minister, the Department of Health and Health Service Executive to restore public confidence in cervical screening. The Academy should be involved in future cervical screen service discussions to ensure full public confidence.
- The Academy advises and recommends that on introduction of HPV screening, the entire cervical screening service be re-established in Ireland to ensure an entirely integrated service for HPV, Cytology and Histopathology for the women of Ireland. The Academy advises that this laboratory service be led by consultant medical scientists and pathologists a service configuration which is now emerging as standard practice in the UK.
- The Academy wishes to clarify that the Irish accredited laboratories that tendered for the cervical screening service in 2007/2008, were informed that they had scored highly in all areas (quality and turn-around times) except cost.
- Cervical screening is a screen and not a diagnostic test. The standard procedure for screening in Ireland is for each smear to be examined independently by two medical scientists under the governance of a clinical pathologist, in accordance with CervicalCheck 'Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening'. These guidelines are based on the British Association for Cytopathology 'Recommended Code of Practice for Cytology Laboratories'.
- The professional staff in cytology screening laboratories in Ireland are medical scientists and pathologists both having specific qualifications and training. All cervical screening laboratories in Ireland practice to ISO 15189 quality standards. These standards in cytology and other clinical laboratories ensure that the test method and verification, result interpretation and reporting are controlled, audited and inspected. This is in keeping with best international practice.