



News and Updates from the Public Health Laboratory Birmingham

To find out more information about the tests and services offered at the Public Health England Public Health Laboratory Birmingham please visit www.heftpathology.com

Two years of 16S PCR and sequencing service

The Public Health Laboratory, Birmingham has provided a service for 16S PCR and sequencing since November 2012. The service can be used to identify bacterial isolates or to detect and identify bacteria in sterile site samples and positive blood cultures which are negative on culture. The service is offered to all microbiology laboratories.

The 16S PCR is run three times a week which gives us average turnaround times of seven days for positive samples and three days for negative samples.

Use of the service has steadily expanded over the two years and we have now tested over 500 samples. A recent audit of our service showed positivity rates as follows:

	Sterile Sites	Blood cultures
Nov 2012 – Oct 2013	46 (24.7%)	5 (62.5%)
Nov 2013 – Oct 2014	70 (28.1%)	29 (83%)

We identified a particularly high positivity rate (55%; n=46) in sterile site samples from abdominal sites (including ascitic and peritoneal fluids). Ten of these samples were liver abscess samples of which 8 (80%) gave a positive result including organisms such as *Streptococcus intermedius*, *Streptococcus dysgalactiae*, *Streptococcus lutientesis*, *Pseudomonas* spp. and *Bartonella* spp. These results have enabled antibiotic treatment to be targeted or narrowed.

If you would like further information about our 16S PCR and sequencing service, please contact Savita.gossain@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Download request forms from:

<http://www.heftpathology.com/item/16s-pcr-and-sequencing.html>

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Ebola

The Public Health Laboratory Birmingham has recently contributed to an Ebola orphan shoe box appeal. Dr Sue Manzoor reports:

“The Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone was documented on the TV and in the news for many weeks. My son’s school, Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School for Boys, decided to prepare shoe boxes for the children in Sierra Leone orphaned by the Ebola Virus. They donated toiletries, teddy bears, stationary and toys and prepared shoe boxes containing these items along with messages.



Shoebboxes ready for Ebola orphans

I mentioned the appeal to my colleagues in the Public Health England, Birmingham Laboratory, who rallied around and in three days, had donated countless numbers of items towards their appeal. As I worked in microbiology, I was asked by the school to



Dr Sue Manzoor and Sierra Leone’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom

give a small talk about what has been done and what is being done to help prevent the spread of the Ebola virus. His Excellency, Edward Mohamed Turay, Sierra Leone’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom was invited to the school to receive the gifts collected and was amazed by the sheer volume of items donated. He gave an emotional speech thanking the boys and the wider community for the wonderful gifts.”

PHE staff in Sierra Leone:

PHE staff have not just been supporting Sierra Leone from afar. One of the Birmingham laboratory Biomedical Scientists, Wilfred Nyoni, spent almost a month (from 13th January to 18th February 2015) carrying out diagnostic work in the PHE laboratory at the Mathaska Ebola Treatment Centre, Port Loko Sierra Leone as part of the war against Ebola disease in West Africa.



Wilfred Nyoni in the Mathaska Ebola Treatment Centre laboratory