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Health Professional News

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Knowledge and competence in point of care testing - the cobas® academy

Roche Diagnostics has launched a new knowledge and competence support platform, which is designed to improve and test user competency in point of care testing through online courses and examination. The flexible e-learning and re-certification platform will help POC coordinators and the hospital administration to better manage their training and re-certification programs.

cobas academy is available in countries offering cobas IT 1000 solution. This excludes the USA.

Point of care (POC) is a growing discipline and is increasingly governed by regulatory requirements including competence assessment and training on a regular basis. Training in many countries is emerging as a mandatory expectation in POC management. In 2006, ISO 22870 was published containing set of standards for POC Testing, including sections dealing with training, certification and re-certification of POC testing systems operators. Effective face-to-face training and re-certification is costly and time consuming.

Re-certification is a necessary ongoing process to ensure continuous quality assurance of point of care testing. As an online knowledge and competence support platform, cobas academy is ideal for delivering courses and exams for recertification to large numbers of staff. Knowledgeable and competent end users can deliver better use and greater reliability of POC devices, fewer errors in the each of the analytic stages and more appropriate use of scarce lab resources. Each of these factors can significantly impact the quality of patient care.

About cobas academy

cobas academy's primary function is to test user competency complementing the initial face-to-face training. Accessible on the hospital intranet, it offers the user an optional pre-test that generates a study plan to focus only on required areas. On passing the exam users obtain a personalized certificate.

cobas academy offers benefits such as greater flexibility in training delivery and the opportunity to involve a larger group of staff. The ease of access allows staff to do their exercise in their own time and at their own pace. Multiple learning styles are used to cater for the needs of different users. The course content is customizable and expandable beyond product facts reflecting particular needs of the department.

At launch the following courses are available:

- cobas b 221
- Accu-Chek Inform
- Accu-Chek Inform II

cobas academy is designed to run in parallel with the cobas IT 1000 solution to improve and test user competency through on-line courses and examination, allowing a single user database and a single log on for all advanced Roche Systems. User passwords can be self managed. These features help networked healthcare providers improve their workflow efficiency and regulatory compliance.

Developed in an authentic environment

cobas academy was initially developed and tested in the UK and the Netherlands. It was designed with the customer and for the customer to allow hospitals to include information about local site policies and other information to ensure competence covers far more than instructions on how to use Roche products. It allows hospitals to apply Roche products to the appropriate local patient care pathways, ensure that users are consistently trained and assessed on this additional information.

The first implementation took place in 2006 at the OLVG in Amsterdam, the Netherlands which had 45 Accu-Chek Inform blood glucose systems. About one thousand nurses had to be trained, then re-certified to use the Accu-Chek Inform systems each year. 130.000 point of care tests are conducted each year at OLVG.

Customer Quote: Sietske Hogenboom, Point of Care Co-ordinator, OLVG Amsterdam, Netherlands
"The OLVG has played an important part in the development of cobas academy along with Marion Fokkert from the Isala Klinieken in Zwolle and Roche Diagnostics. We saw it as a way of delivering consistency in training across large numbers of staff. It helps us be compliant with national regulations and hospital policies by keeping an up-to-date user database, removing uncertified users locking them out of the instruments. It helps target our resources more effectively on staff who require more in depth training. cobas academy is also something local as it is customizable to reflect the practice and policies in my hospital and that helps me to ensure that the nurses know what they are doing and that risk of human error is minimized."

cobas academy has also been developed and piloted at Belfast City Hospital in the UK. There are more than 2,000 staff at the hospital that run 40 Accu-Chek Inform blood glucose systems as well as cobas b 221 blood gas analyzers, CoaguChek XS Plus and Roche Cardiac Readers.

Customer Quote: Jeremy Neely, Point of Care Co-ordinator, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast, UK
"Our nurses already have over 20 mandatory courses to attend, many with mandatory annual updates. This presents the lab with difficulties in getting time allocated for nurse training and ensuring that nurses attend training dates. User competence is a key concern with point of care testing as it has a direct impact on the quality of patients care. cobas academy allows nurses greater flexibility in completing mandatory POCT training as well as improving their IT skills. It helps the lab by reducing the time spent on annual re-certification training, and allows training to be delivered to larger groups of staff. cobas academy combined with cobas IT 1000 will be rolled out across all hospitals in Northern Ireland covering more than 25,000 staff."

About Roche

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-focused healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals and diagnostics. As the world's biggest biotech company and an innovator of products and services for the early detection, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, the Group contributes on a broad range of fronts to improving people's health and quality of life. Roche is the world leader in in-vitro diagnostics and drugs for cancer and transplantation, and is a market leader in virology. It is also active in other major therapeutic areas such as autoimmune diseases, inflammatory and metabolic disorders and diseases of the central nervous system. In 2007 sales by the Pharmaceuticals Division totalled 36.8 billion Swiss francs, and the Diagnostics Division posted sales of 9.3 billion francs. Roche has R&D agreements and strategic alliances with numerous partners, including majority ownership interests in Genentech and Chugai, and invested over 8 billion Swiss francs in R&D in 2007. Worldwide, the Group employs about 80,000 people. Additional information is available on the Internet at www.roche.com.

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