Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals

NHS

Clinical Biochemistry Department

Research and Development in NHS Pathology

Aim: To understand how we position ourselves with regard to R&D and how we can take things forward for the future. Key things we will cover in this tutorial:

- Basic things that need to be in Place for good R&D
- Different types of R&D in Pathology
- Current R&D Projects in Biochemistry

National Level

New strategy to be confirmed in February 2014 after consultation – see electronic copy on www.cityassays.org.uk. Key elements:

- Increase NHS and patient participation
- Benefit the patient and the economy
- Develop the evidence base

Local Trusts

- R&D office with a Director and Manager. Includes a back office team. Many changes to funding in last 15 years. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) distributes R&D funds based on assessments of the quality and volume of research that NHS organizations undertake.
- Our R&D office spends a lot of time monitoring our R&D activity.

Ethics Approval: Studies often require ethical approval and applying for this can be very time consuming. In Pathology we are able to use results and surplus samples for research as long as we adhere to some key processes such as anonymising samples.

R&D in Biochemistry: Help with Clinical Trials: We are involved in a wide range of clinical trials. We are consulted before trials begin and cost up the work. Cross payments are made to us for the trial work that comes through our laboratory

Commercial Research: We have a limited activity with commercial research. This can be from collecting samples of interest in developing new commercial methods to fundamental collaborative R&D. We have IP licences at present for our blood spot work for example.

Internal R&D: In the last 10 years our emphasis has been on undertaking projects that can quickly lead to changes in services we offer. A few examples in the last few years include:

- FT-IR for stones
- New methods for TPMT and thiopurine nucleotides
- New methods for drugs of abuse screening and unknown drug testing
- IT applications: test intervention, direct to patient results
- Dried blood spot technology – including patent application and IP licensing.
- Direct to the public services with Vitamin D service
- Clinical pathways – use of blood spots in CRP testing

Future Work

- Continue with innovative approaches in our different specialist areas
- Look at the blood sciences laboratory as an area that needs some R&D – automation approaches will benefit from more input from R&D

JD Berg 10th February 2014