Improving Sample Management Questionnaire

This questionnaire can help you identify how much time you spend looking for samples to use and carrying out admin activities. If you don't know how long certain tasks take, then you can monitor your own time over a couple of weeks to get the average. If you can't find the information mentioned in the questions and it's important to you then that's a strong indicator that you should perhaps take a closer look at your systems and processes.

If you're currently using spreadsheets to manage your samples, there are a couple of additional points that you may want to consider. Spreadsheets can seem the quick, simple, and cost-effective option for managing your sample and lab data. However, there are some potentially damaging risks if they are not carefully managed and regularly reviewed. The evidence of this is never too far away - The Verge, *Scientists rename human genes to stop Microsoft Excel from misreading them as dates* and [4] Ziemann et al, Genome Biology, 2016, *Gene name errors are widespread in the scientific literature*).

Sample Management Time and Process Analysis Questionnaire

1. How much time per day do you spend updating your spreadsheet/system?

2. How often do you update your spreadsheet/system?

3. Do you record all the information or just the data that you think is important?

4. If you were to take a quick look at your spreadsheets, can you spot any inconsistencies in terminology or classifications used or differences in the number or date formats being used?

5. How long does it take you to find samples you want to work with?

6. How much time do you spend emailing/speaking to others to find samples or information about samples?

7. How long would it take you to find samples that have been:

   o Donated by the same donor?

   o Donated by the same donor on a single visit?

   o Donated by female donors, under 30 with specific sample and disease attributes and characteristics?

o Taken for a particular study?

o Taken from donors who have withdrawn consent?

o Set as due to expire in the next 30 days?

o Stored at -80?

o Checked out/used in the last 30 days?

o Sat in storage for more than 6 months?

8. What is your process for checking consent? How long does it take you to find out what consent is registered against your samples?

9. If you had an audit inspection tomorrow, are you ready? If not, what do you need to do and how long would this take you?

10. Have you recently procured samples without checking if you already had any matching your criteria in your lab or organisation?

11. When did you last do a storage audit? How long did it take and how many unexpected samples did you find or identify as missing?

12. How much of your data would you estimate is duplicated (this is where the same sample or donor may exist in multiple spreadsheets and systems)?

13. How do you keep track of any samples that are on loan or have been shipped to another lab?

14. Do you have a consent withdrawal process? Can you locate all the donor's samples even if dispatched to another lab, part of a composite or pool?

Looking to improve how you manage your samples?

Discover how Achiever Medical LIMS helps improve your sample management and lab processes by contacting our team at Interactive Software Limited:

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