ABSTRACT

Proficiency Testing Australia (PTA) is continuously expanding and developing its range of proficiency testing programs. The Forensic Proficiency Testing Survey, conducted by PTA in 2013, was completed by 103 forensic laboratories in 30 states and territories. The survey aimed to assess the availability of proficiency testing programs across the Australian forensic science laboratories and to identify areas where new programs are needed.

To enable a fast and simple response and hoping for better participation rates, a short electronic questionnaire was sent to 103 contacts representing 30 accredited forensic science laboratories. In total, 13 responses were received, representing a 13% return rate.

APLAC Proficiency Testing Committee on the needs and the approach of our forensic science laboratories to proficiency testing.

METHODOLOGY

To assess the availability and frequency of forensic proficiency testing programs, a short electronic questionnaire was sent to 103 contacts representing 30 accredited forensic science laboratories. The survey aimed to determine the frequency of participation and the range of programs offered.

RESULTS

Nine survey participants indicated that their laboratory currently participates regularly in proficiency testing programs, while the remaining two participants considered that proficiency testing would not add notable benefits to their activity. However, it is noted that the NATO Technical Circular 20 - Proficiency Testing criteria - Forensic Science, states that "where proficiency testing is not a routine activity, participation is mandatory and at least one test per discrete testing activity must be undertaken annually, where available" [6].

CONCLUSIONS

PTA's survey found that forensic laboratories in Australia are regularly participating in proficiency testing programs and that it is considered as a valuable part of the quality assurance system. The surveyed laboratories expressed a great interest in new proficiency testing activities, linked to their specific activities. They identified numerous forensic disciplines that are soft limited or no proficiency testing programs offered, while some of the existing programs do not meet their needs.

REFERENCES