

Approved By	Date
Revision Date(s):	

Terms of Reference

NUCHAL TRANSLUCENCY QUALITY ASSESSMENT (NTQA) WORKING GROUP

Background

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has recently invested in a new Prenatal Screening Program for Ontario, which is managed by the Better Outcomes Registry and Network (BORN) Ontario. Prenatal Screening Ontario (PSO) is tasked with developing and implementing a nuchal translucency (NT) quality assessment program for first trimester screening in Ontario. Since the commencement of NT screening in Ontario, a lack of quality assessment (QA) and feedback to sonographers has resulted in diminished performance over time. As a result, the Ontario MMS labs have, out of necessity, been continuously developing and readjusting coefficients applied to individual sonographers' NT identification numbers. A sonographer's performance is assessed by plotting NT numbers against fetal crown rump length (CRL) and comparing the curve to that of a normal population established by the Fetal Medicine Foundation (FMF). Coefficients are then used to adjust each NT number submitted by a sonographer to account for a scanning bias, typically chronic under-measurement.

While the application of individual coefficients allows for continued quality performance of the MMS overall, this practice creates the potential for continued, unmonitored deterioration of sonographer performance. This has the downstream effect of reduced clinical utility of raw NT measurements outside of the prenatal screening risk algorithm.

Purpose

The objective of an NTQA program is to support the Ontario sonography community in the acquisition of quality NT measurements, to provide education, and feedback as well as a means of ongoing QA to the province. The overarching goal of the program is to improve NT ultrasound performance to the level of the normal curve established by the FMF. The role of the NTQA Working Group will be to guide and support PSP in developing and initiating an NTQA program, and to identify pathways for sonographer communication, education and remediation as necessary.

Accountability

The NTQA Working Group reports directly to the Leadership Team of Prenatal Screening Ontario.

Membership

The PSO NTQA Working Group will be comprised of 8-10 core members selected as individuals based on specific expertise and experience to best enable the work of this committee to be done in a positive and effective way. Membership will be sought in the following:

- Ultrasonographers
- Representation from relevant governing bodies (e.g. Sonography Canada, OAMRS, CMRTO, CPSO)
- Obstetrician
- QA Specialist
- Maternal Fetal Medicine specialist
- Radiologist
- IHF Quality Advisor
- Patient representative

Task force members will have been selected as individuals to represent a specific expertise, or will be specific delegates nominated by their organization or region. Alternate delegates will not normally be invited to meetings.

Membership includes voting and non-voting members. The non-voting members may include ex-officio representatives from the MOHLTC, PSO staff and any representatives who may be invited as subject experts. All other members, including the Chair are voting members. Membership should be reviewed on a yearly basis and periodic rotation of members should occur. PSO will provide a supportive secretariat function.

Nominations and Expression of Interest

PSO will issue a call for Expression of Interest for membership on this working group to ensure broad community participation. A nominations committee established by BORN will review all submissions and will nominate individuals based on the aforementioned membership criteria, excluding any individuals with conflicts of interest (as detailed below).

Responsibilities

Chair: The working group Chair will have a leadership role in providing effective governance and administration of the working group and is responsible for:

- Working with PSO staff to schedule meetings and notify committee members
- Inviting guests to attend meetings when required
- Guiding the meeting in accordance with the agenda, including ensuring decision items result in a decision or action
- Reviewing and approving meeting minutes and ensuring circulation to all members of the committee (with the assistance of BORN staff)

Working group members: Members will review agenda items, make recommendations, collaborate as part of working groups on educational material.

A PSO Resource Person will assist the Chair with meeting planning and agenda development as well as documentation and communications as requested. The PSO leadership will be present to support meeting discussions and facilitate action items agreed to at the task force meetings.

Term

The chair will have a term of three years, but may remain as a committee member after the term is completed. The position is not renewable, but a person may return as chair for another term after a cycle of a different chair.

Members of the committee will generally have terms of three years, renewable once. Renewed appointments will normally be for another 3 years, however, after the inaugural three years of the committee, some renewals will be for 1 or 2 years, to ensure continuity among the membership. Additional renewal may be possible to allow a member to assume the chair or vice-chair role, if requested. Members are expected to attend a minimum of 50% of meetings per year to maintain membership. Members are requested to withdraw membership if unable to attend meetings on a regular basis.

Meetings

Face-to-face meetings will be held at the call of the chair no more than two times a year. Other business will be conducted by teleconference and email, with no interval between meetings of more than 6 months. Meetings will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order; however, every effort will be made to reach decisions by consensus.

Quorum

Quorum shall be 50 percent of voting members, either present in-person or via telephone conference.

Decision-Making Process

Members share accountability for decisions. There should be open and direct communication based on honesty, respect and transparency, to ensure that all perspectives are heard. Decisions should be evidence or most-promising practice based. Decisions will be made by consensus whenever possible.

Conflict of Interest

Members will not include any person who's personal or professional activities constitute a conflict of interest (COI). Any potential COI must be disclosed to the Chair. Such activities include, but are not limited to, direct ties to private industry and personal interests in developing related technologies, including patents and patents pending. Incumbent and existing members will disclose to the chair, without delay, any actual or potential situations that arise which might be reasonably interpreted as either a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest.

Confidentiality

Every member will respect the confidentiality of matters brought before the committee, subcommittee or any of its working groups. Meeting materials, including slides, are all to be considered confidential and may not be used outside committee work and may not be disclosed or shared with non-committee members. If such material is no longer confidential and may be circulated externally, the committee will be notified by the chair.

Compensation

Serving as a committee member is voluntary. Members will be reimbursed for expenses incurred to attend meetings as per the BORN Travel Reimbursement Policy and Procedure.

Administrative Support

PSO Administrative staff will provide administrative support for the committee.