

LAB TESTS ONLINE-UK ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Lab Tests Online-UK Mission Statement

'To increase patient understanding of laboratory tests empowering them to become active partners in their own healthcare'

Lab Tests Online-UK (labtestsonline.org.uk (LTO-UK)) is an online resource designed to provide patients and carers with easy-to-understand information about clinical laboratory tests.

It is patient-centred: Its primary role is to help patients find easy to understand information on laboratory tests for particular diagnoses, conditions or diseases

It is peer reviewed: LTO-UK is written by practicing laboratory doctors and scientists with assistance from lay advisory specialists to help members of the public understand the many clinical laboratory tests that are used in the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of disease.

It is non-commercial: LTO-UK does not search for nor receive commercial sponsorship. Support is generously provided by the Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (ACB), the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) and the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH).

Management structure

The LTO-UK Board is accountable to the ACB through the Director of Communication and Publications.

Board members 2018

Chair: Dr Danielle B Freedman
Treasurer: Dr Michael Bosomworth
Managing Editor: Dr Sally Stock
Technical Lead: Stuart Jones
Marketing and Promotion: Rebecca Powney
Patient Liaison: Professor Jonathan Kay
Patient Advocate: Dr Patricia Wilkie OBE
IBMS representative: Michelle Brereton
Royal College of Pathologists representative: Dr Tom Butler
Administration: Dragana Landup-Horgan

An editorial team and managing editor work under direction of the management board and are responsible for the website content. All editorial work is done on a voluntary basis. Eight new editors and one new lay editor have been recruited during 2018, which will enable content across all disciplines of laboratory medicine to be reviewed more frequently. The full list of contributors can be found on the website.

Principal Editors

Dr Brian Payne (news editor)
Dr Tom Butler (haematology)
Dr Charles Van Heyningen (biochemistry)
Dr Matthew Buckland (immunology)
Dr Christopher Holmes (microbiology)
Dr Laura Dexter (virology)
Dr John Schofield (histopathology)
Dr Nicole Corriette (GP representative)
Dr Ian Godber (website comments advisor)

Historical context

The Lab Tests Online concept originated in the USA and was developed into a website by the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) and launched in 2001. The UK laboratory profession recognised the potential of this site at an early stage and senior members of the ACB were successful in obtaining sufficient funding from the Health Foundation and the Department of Health (England) to develop a UK site. LTO-UK, with 1,800 pages, was launched by the Minister of Health, Rosie Winterton in June 2004.

The number of visitors to the site grew rapidly and LTO-UK is now part of an international collaboration of fifteen countries reaching patients throughout the world. Lab Tests Online has served over 360 million visitors since the initiative started in 2001.

Targeted for and used primarily by patients and their family and carers, the website has become a popular reference tool for the public across the spectrum of health literacy with approximately 15% of visitors being healthcare professionals. While the site adopts a language and presentation style appropriate for easy public communication, where possible, the test and disease information provided reflects the different needs and expectations of all visitors.

The website

The LTO-UK team monitor site activity and identify the popular pages, search engines and links that carry visitors to the website. The content of the site continues to grow and evolve and is reviewed and updated at regular intervals. The independent and professional approach of LTO-UK (which has no commercial allegiance) with review of content by NHS professionals in the relevant laboratory speciality is increasingly what separates it from other information sites.

Lab Tests Online-UK subscribes to the principles of the Health on the Net Foundation, <https://www.healthonnet.org/HONcode/Conduct.html?HONConduct995553>.

The HONcode is a code of ethics that guides site managers in setting up a minimum set of mechanisms to provide quality, objective and transparent medical information tailored to the needs of the audience.

The hit rate for 2018 averaged 168,000 sessions per month, which is 17% down on 2017. Analysis shows that the drop in hit rate is primarily a reduction in organic search traffic (search engine derived). Referral and direct hit traffic was comparable to 2017. The single biggest source of referrals was from the NHS.uk website, as it was in 2017.

AACC are working to recover the lost website traffic resulting from major redesign and migration in December 2017, since traffic to LTO sites globally was down in 2018. A number of structural changes to the new site have been made and figures for Nov-Dec 2018 show signs of a significant pick up in traffic (180,000 hits in Nov vs 152,000 in Oct).

We continue to expand the number of third party systems who use integrated links to LTO-UK and whilst this is currently responsible for a relatively small number of visitors to the site, we envisage this growing rapidly as the NHS England Patient Online programme moves forward.

The following GP systems currently have or are developing integrated links to LTO-UK: TPP (SystemOne), HealthFabric, iSOFT, OMNI lab, INPS, Microtest, DrDoctor, i-Patient and Manage your health (app). In addition we continue to promote LTO-UK via: NHS Choices, UCLH OCS, the Welsh National Order Communications Project and Choosing Wisely UK (in process).

The LTO-UK team are working with the ACB Scientific Committee and the Royal College of Pathologists to push for new mandatory standards in GP Information Systems that display results directly to patients.

2018 website statistics

Total tests: 305	Sessions: 2,007,063
Total conditions: 119	Users: 1,538,569
New articles developed: 14	Page views: 6,378,105
Pages reviewed: 58	

International profile

The LTO-UK editorial board has successfully worked with the AACC in promoting the adoption of Lab Tests Online in countries across the world – initially in Europe and now further afield in Australia, China, South Korea, Brazil and Turkey. Currently, there are 15 international sites using 13 languages. The editorial developments are discussed at two global editors' meetings. In July 2018, Dr Danielle Freedman represented LTO-UK at the LTO Global Editors Meeting in Chicago, USA. Dr Freedman was a self-funded attendee.

In 2018, the AACC won several awards and accolades for Lab Tests Online content and the new website design:

- Communicators Award of Distinction by the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts
- Hermes Creative Award
- Community Brands Innovation Awards which recognises the associations and nonprofits that are using technology in creative and innovative ways to positively impact social change
- Platinum dotCOMM Award that honours excellence in web creativity and digital communication
- 'Highly Commended' rating by HealthWeb Navigator.

Publications featuring LTO-UK in 2018

Earlier in the year, Luton and Dunstable NHS Trust featured the award of the ACB honorary membership to Dr Danielle Freedman in an online news article with a reference to the LTO-UK website: <https://www.ldh.nhs.uk/news/lds-chief-medical-advisor-awarded-honorary-membership-of-prestigious-professional-society#>. This story was also covered by the ACB News in February 2019.

News articles published on the LTO-UK website during 2018:

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/earlier-myeloma-detection>, *Two simple blood tests may help earlier detection of a rare cancer*, 25 October 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/genetic-testing>, *NHS England to roll out genetic testing for rare diseases and cancer*, 13 July 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/pathologists-guardian-21-june-2018>, *'Pathologists like me save lives daily' – The Guardian, 21 June 2018*, 22 June 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/breast-cancer-chemotherapy>, *Genetic test may help some patients with breast cancer avoid chemotherapy*, 19 June 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/biotin>, *Taking biotin tablets can alter some lab test results*, 8 May 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/prostate-cancer-screening-tests-men-no-symptoms-do-not-save-lives>, *Prostate cancer screening tests in men with no symptoms do not save lives*, 19 March 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/news/new-biomarker-may-identify-patients-higher-risk-after-heart-attack>, *New biomarker may identify patients at higher risk after a heart attack*, 6 March 2018

<https://labtestsonline.org.uk/tsh-unexplained-infertility>, *Higher normal TSH may be related to unexplained infertility*, 29 January 2018

Conferences and events attended in 2018

Members of the LTO-UK board spoke and attended a number of events throughout the year including:

- ‘*BSH Annual Scientific Meeting*’ in Liverpool
- ‘*ACB FOCUS*’ in Manchester
- ‘*The Annual Conference for the National Association of Patient Participation*’ in Nottingham
- ‘*EFLM Strategic Conference*’ in Mannheim, Germany
- ‘*RCGP Conference*’ in Glasgow
- WEQAS Conference 2018

There has been overwhelming positive feedback from these events, increased networking opportunities and invaluable promotion of LTO-UK.

Social Media

The @LabTestsUK twitter account grows steadily with currently over 1,253 followers. It provides the public with a direct route for engagement with our team and a social media platform for us to promote the website and actively engage with the public and key healthcare and laboratory peers.

The LTO-UK facebook page now has 1466 likes and is followed by 1460 people.

Reporting and analysis

The LTO-UK board monitor the progress of the website to measure success according to their business strategies set for the following three years (2017 –2019):

- **Site visits and App downloads**
 - To increase annual traffic to the site by 10% year on year
In 2017 there were 2,848,450 visits to the website, in 2018 there were 2,007,063. We did not meet the target of increasing traffic by 10% over the year due to traffic decline associated with migrating to a new platform but it is predicted that the new website platform will allow us to meet this target in 2019.
 - To increase active users of the mobile App downloads by 10% year on year
This target is no longer a required objective. The App was discontinued in March 2018 due to a new mobile friendly website design.
- **Links with GP systems**
 - To finalise work with INPS (patient portal application) – Completed
 - Continue discussions with EMIS to integrate by 2018 – On-going
- **Champion recruitment and retention**
 - To double the number of LTO-UK champions by 2019 from 38 in 2016
In 2018 there were 114 new champions, exceeding this target.
 - To increase the proportion of non-laboratory scientists to 40% by 2019
In 2018 there were 39 non-laboratory champions out of 114 in total (34%). Further work is planned to focus on non-laboratory champion recruitment including attendance at NAPP and RCGP (Royal College of General Practitioners) conferences.

- To recruit patient Champions
In 2017 there were 17 patient champions. In 2018 there were 34 patient champions.
- Send out Champion Newsletters quarterly
Target not met, plan to use new volunteer for this
- Update marketing literature following the website redesign – Completed
- **Make up of Editorial Team**
 - To recruit 5 patient reviewing editors by the end of 2019
Two recruited. Further work is planned to increase these numbers in 2019
- **PR & Media coverage (on and offline)**
 - At least one article about LTO-UK in a non-laboratory professional magazine
 - At least one article/blog/electronic journal in a non-laboratory digital publication
Targets were not met.
- **Social Media impact and reach**
 - Twitter: to increase by 10% year on year
In 2017 there were 1,074 followers. In 2018 there were 1253 followers. An increase of 17%.
 - Facebook: to increase by 10% year on year
In 2017 the page had 1,432 likes, increasing by 2% to 1,460 likes in 2018.
Plans to amalgamate the Twitter and Facebook page are in process and this is hoped to boost coverage by both.

The future

LTO-UK objectives for the three years business plan¹:

- to continue to implement the business plan
- to increase annual traffic by at least 10% year on year
- to ensure that GPs have direct links from their surgery to LTO-UK website
- to monitor and assess LTO-UK impact in primary care setting.
- to increase links with other public facing websites, e.g. national health related charities and others
- to secure permanent funding to support these activities
- to work with GP and patient record system suppliers to further integrate LTO-UK into patient facing applications.
- To work with the ACB and RCPATH to push for mandatory standards for systems that display test results directly to patients.

¹LTO-UK Business plan 2017-2019

Financial details

LTO-UK does not search for nor receive commercial sponsorship. This is considered to be important to assure all users of our independence.

LTO-UK is administered through the Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and does not publish separate accounts. These are included within the Association's audited accounts. It had a nominal balance at the beginning of the year of £49,001. Total expenditure (excluding VAT) was £28,509. The major items of expenditure are the salary of the part-time administrator and the licence fee payable to the American Association for Clinical Chemistry. Total income was £30,000. The ACB contributes to the project both financially and through the provision of additional administrative support as required, and by providing accommodation for meetings, to a total of £10,000; grants of £10,000 each were made by the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists. The closing balance (31 December 2017) was £50,491. We are having discussions with patient groups and other professional organisations with a view to securing long term funding. These figures are provisional end of year figures, pending audit.

Lab Tests Online-UK

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