



**Wisconsin State
Laboratory of Hygiene**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

“A Different Kind of Exercise”

June 28, 2017

Erin Bowles, B.S., MT(ASCP)
Laboratory Network Coordinator
and Co-Biosafety Officer,

Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene,
Communicable Disease Division,
Madison, WI,

Phone: 608-224-4251

erin.bowles@slh.wisc.edu

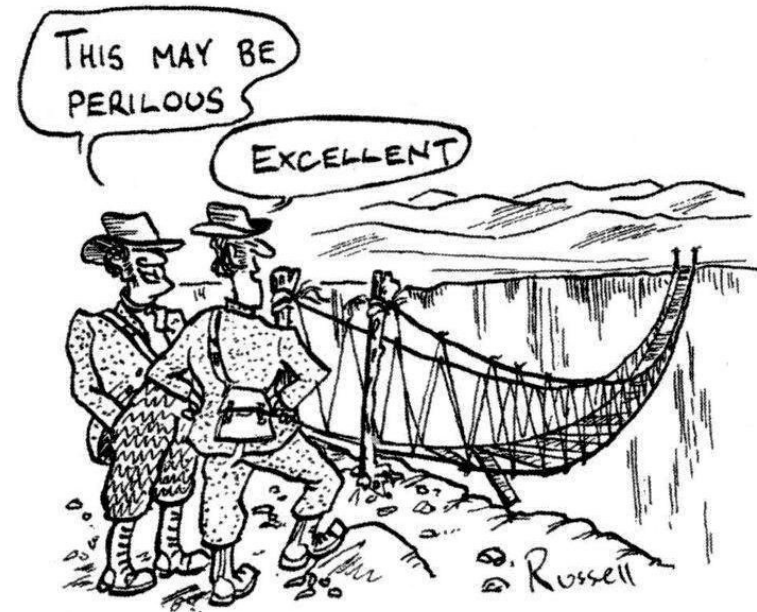




Why A Risk Assessment Exercise?

- Collaborated with our Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee
- Developed original risk assessment (RA) tool in 2009 and shared with clinical laboratories in 2010
- Document not well used by labs
- How can we get clinical labs to use?
- Revised document and asked all labs to complete and return to the WSLH – RA exercise Nov. 2016

Victorian risk assessment





What Did We Do?



- Risk Assessment Tool sent out to 150 WCLN labs – a mix of clinical and public health labs
- 68.7% (103) laboratories completed the risk assessment tool (RA) and submitted results to the WSLH.
- 47 follow-up letters sent to labs who didn't submit results
 - 9 completed and submitted their RA after we had analyzed the data
 - 74.7% (112) completed the RA tool





Reasons Cited for Not Submitting Results

- Change of administrative leadership
- Person who was responsible for performing the RA moved to a new job or retired
- Other projects had higher priority (i.e. IQCP, new computer system, move to new laboratory)
- Short staffed - working on the bench
- Not enough time
- Change of testing - No longer performing microbiology but referring to a central facility in the healthcare system and thought the RA was only for microbiology.
- Forgot about it
- Performed a different risk assessment



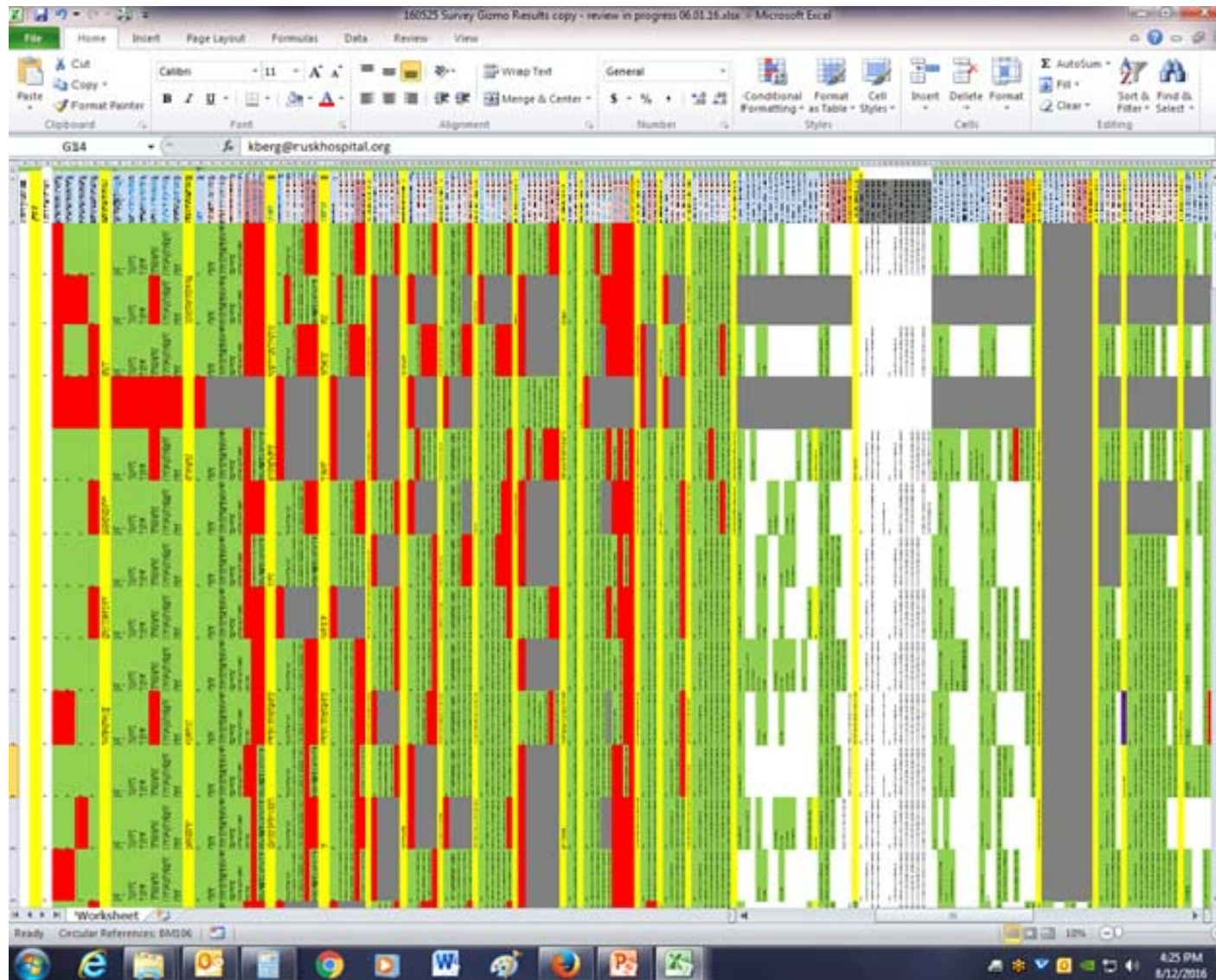
Data Analysis Challenges

- Very time consuming entering results and analyzing results
- Lack of expertise manipulating data in Excel
- How and what to compare – would have been useful to know the size of the facility to be able to compare like sized facilities.
- So much data, difficult to look at the big picture





Heat Mapping





Exercise Goals

- Identify common gaps and suggest mitigation strategies to improve overall culture of biosafety in WI laboratories
- Report our findings to the labs at our September 2016 Regional Meetings
- Elicit feedback about the tool/ RA process and how it could be improved to be more useful.
- Encourage laboratories to use the tool to develop their own internal RA forms/policies/plans.





Identified Gaps



- Most common gaps identified were:
 - A general lack of understanding of biosafety levels
 - Labs not providing training in proper use of a BSC and not assessing competency
 - No policies in place for monitoring stored organisms
 - Many labs don't understand packaging and shipping regulations
 - Lack of specific biosafety policies, especially when to do risk assessment

Mitigation Strategies = Training



- Provided training at Regional Meetings in the proper use of a biosafety cabinet.
 - Videos
- Provided training on proper packaging and shipping
 - Game – what's wrong with this package
 - Pat Payne training through APHL
- During laboratory site visits offer to watch and critique employee working in a BSC or packaging a specimen for transport
- Continue to promote the need to improve biosafety



Lessons Learned

- Biosafety and biosafety risk assessment are not a priority for clinical laboratories
 - No regulation
 - No funding
- Little administrative support for biosafety and staff not held accountable (until there is an event)
- Biosafety risk assessment still confused with IQCP risk assessment
 - More training
- Will be very difficult to get laboratories to move biosafety risk assessment out of microbiology and into the general laboratory.



What's Next?

- Currently in the process of revising the risk assessment (RA) tool
- Provide more training on biosafety RA vs. IQCP RA
- Will ask WI laboratories to repeat a risk assessment using the new tool and report results to the WSLH
- Compare to previous RA
- Continue to focus on biosafety
- Message has to be personal





Comments or Questions?

