ASP
Business Case

Replacement of TLA bulk loader by separate high-performance bulk sorter

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MÜNCHEN KLINIK

Focus on preanalytics in the München Klinik laboratories
München Klinik concentrates its laboratory services at the Neuperlach site. From here, the clinic's own sites in Bogenhausen, Neuperlach, Thalkirchner Straße, Harlaching and Schwabing, with a total of approx. 3,000 beds, are also supplied, as are some external senders.

Dr. Alexander v. Meyer has been Director of Laboratory Medicine there since 2020 and is responsible for all laboratories, i.e. Clinical Chemistry and Microbiology. In this newly created position, one of his central tasks is to create new synergies between the laboratories.

„My passion is still preanalytics," says v. Meyer, who sees himself in exactly the right place. „If we want to do even more for the patient, it's the triggers in preanalytics that make it easiest for us to achieve something." As head of the DGKL's Extraanalytical Quality Working Group and a member of the EFLM's Pre- and Postanalytical Working Group, v. Meyer knows exactly what potential lies dormant here. „That's where the low hanging fruits are, that's where most of the mistakes made in analytics continue to happen.„

New TLA required more efficient sample inlet
München Klinik has over 10 years of experience with bulk sorters of older design. With the introduction of the TLA in mid-2021, these separate devices were to be abolished at the Neuperlach site and all samples were to be fed directly into the TLA processes via bulk loaders. For technical reasons, this was not directly feasible in this way. „We still need identification of the sample first, then activation, which the TLA system cannot do itself in this way."

Initially, an attempt was made to solve the problem with the old sorter that was still in place, but this proved to be too slow and was unable to map processes that would have allowed urgent samples to be processed in an adequate time frame.

Munich Clinic assures medical departments of a 60-minute response time for life hazard specimens. If these samples are only sorted into a separate tray, this cannot be achieved without additional staffing, as 10 to 15 minutes may pass before someone routinely goes to the machine and finds the samples there.

ASP SortPro is up to the task
„Due to the more modern IT structure and higher flexibility, we saw an opportunity to improve this with ASP SortPro," says v. Meyer, explaining his choice. Here, each sorting destination has as standard a recognition of whether samples have been assigned there since the last tray emptying.

This signal is now used for München Klinik to give a specific signal at the widely visible operating light of the device, indicating the arrival of life-threatening samples. This signal, visible throughout the laboratory, that urgent samples are waiting to be picked up at the sorter, is a crucial point for Munich Clinic. Keeping TAT running with few staff so that processes fit otherwise remains a challenge that cannot be solved.

The verdict of the Munich laboratory director is clear:

„The ASP SortPro can do that, the other older sorters we have are not suitable for urgent sample material.„

Business Case

Product:
ASP SortPro10

Special requirements:
Rapid identification of samples in peak times

Shortened TAT for life hazard samples

Processing of e-swaps and other swab tubes.

Additional benefits:
Flexible teaching and assignment of tube types

Target compartment displays

Two additional features become game changers in practice
Even during the implementation of the process on the new sorter, another point stood out that „makes all the difference and really surprised me," as v. Meyer puts it. „The flexibility with which you can handle it, even as a user, is actually greater than with the competing products I'm familiar with." This includes the simple teaching of tube types or the assignments that can be freely and independently edited „Our laboratory IT has now implemented a model that is much easier to adapt than was possible with the old structure. „

„I initially thought the target compartment displays were a gimmick," says the lab director, describing his initial skepticism. „But soon the idea came up for a use case that is worth its weight in gold!" In the event that the TLA failed and manual work had to be done, samples used to be separated because of centrifugation and then processed together again. This seemingly unnecessary splitting repeatedly led to confusion and disruptions.

Today, in manual operation, the sorting rule is simply changed in order to perform this splitting only then. On the display of the target compartments, this change from TLA to manual operation is automatically visible to everyone, so the changeover runs smoothly. The experienced preanalyst appreciates these practical features:

„It's not until you have these capabilities
that you can think of applications for them."

Flexibility in sample sizes leads to synergies between laboratories
When installed at the peak of Covid 19 PCR testing, the increased flexibility in terms of tube types was immediately utilized: Now all samples, including microbiology, come onto the instrument at once. Munich clinic works with e-swabs and also slightly larger swab tubes, which also run flawlessly through the SortPro.

Previously, microbiology and clinical chemistry were separated manually and then only the clinical chemistry ran through the sorter. „With the ASP SortPro, the primary arrival reception can also run automatically for microbiology with its current 3,000 Corona samples," the laboratory manager is very satisfied. In addition, there are about 3,000 samples from the daily clinical routine, half of which arrive within 2 hours in the morning.

„We always aim to be particularly fast.
SortPro supports this with its high processing speed,
and not just during peak times. „

Overall a very successful acquisition
According to the customer, the installation went flawlessly, the device convinces with high performance, the service with short response times and the operation does not puzzle even semi-skilled operators. High processing speed, preferential processing for life-threatening samples and the greater variability of the tube spectrum are the decisive points for the Munich clinic. All set goals were achieved, and additional features further improve the bottom line.

The conclusion of Dr. Alexander v. Meyer is as efficient as his new laboratory entrance:

„We're very happy with it."

Munich/Elmshorn in March 2022

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