The Art (and Science) of Newborn Screening

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Art of NBS: Lessons Learned I

• With high-volume experience comes an intuition for follow-up
  – Investigate gut feelings: often they are right

• “Once something is abnormal, normal isn’t always normal” – Sheila Weiss
  – Exercise care in interpreting subsequent screens’ results after a previous specimen was abnormal

• Be creative when you run into dead ends
  – Each case is a puzzle to solve
  – Use all resources available, including colleagues
Art of NBS: Lessons Learned II

• Lab and follow-up can create good synergy working together
  – Look for ways to collaborate and share information, especially when challenges arise

• Pay attention to what the data say
  – Don’t be lulled by the high-volume, repetitive nature of follow-up; look for patterns and exceptions

• Regularly evaluate cutoffs and protocols
  – Work with clinical specialists to work out kinks
Art of NBS: Lessons Learned III

• Don’t reinvent the wheel
  – See what has been published
  – Ask: a lot has never been published

• Leverage the experience of outside programs
  – Chances are someone else is facing the same problem
  – Power in numbers
Final Thoughts

• Be courteous

• Ask questions!
  – what do/don’t we know?
  – what would be important to find out?
  – how are we doing and what could we do better?

• Data are our friends – get acquainted, try to understand them and question them if they seem wrong

• Don’t fly on autopilot!

• Where can we get the biggest bang for our buck?