The following is an outline of a new programme we propose offering to assist users of our urodynamics products achieve a consistently high quality of clinical measurement when using the Acquidata Uromac and Anomac systems.

This programme has just become available. Whether you are already a Qualantee participant or are just considering joining, we would like to receive your comments and suggestions. We at Neomedix are aware of the benefits to be gained through a closer regular association with our urodynamics and anorectal manometry equipment users and we will do all we can to ensure the Qualantee programme imparts our considerable product and clinical engineering knowledge to your department at a fair price.

Background
Several factors have cumulatively caused us to seriously consider the need for providing this type of programme. They are;

• Urodynamics and Anorectal testing has increased considerably in Australia over the last few years.
• Q.A. accreditation is now widely adopted in Australian hospitals and requires quality assurance verification for both the clinical measurement procedure and performance of the diagnostic equipment.
• There is currently no professional Australian society for technologists carrying out clinical testing in these areas. There is no recognised formal training programme or qualification criteria for those working in these fields.
• At the 1995 International Continence Society meeting held in Sydney there was focus on the need for enhanced and continued training of those carrying out clinical urodynamics testing. In fact some urodynamicsists at the meeting asked us then to consider how we could assist in this. Our role as the major urodynamics supplier in Australia places us in a strong position to assist in this way.

Current Observations
• During the last 5-7 years there has been an almost total transition from chart based urodynamics recording systems to sophisticated computer based systems. Very few users of urodynamics equipment are already trained in computer use.
• In addressing equipment support, one needs to point out the necessity of computer system maintenance. This covers issues about which we are sure most clinical users are unaware. Main concerns include the regular need to ‘rebuild the desktop’ and carry out ‘disk first aid’ by running diagnostic software to correct hidden system errors, disk errors and rectify data fragmentation. On nearly all clinical computers we see patient files which have been inadvertently saved to an undefined destination. In most cases this means patient files are ‘lost’ in calibration folders or folders relating to other applications. Users run the risk of system ‘crashes’ and loss of data if the system is not periodically maintained.
• With very few exceptions the hospital Biomedical Engineering departments in even major hospitals have little (if anything) to do with the support of the urodynamics and anorectal measurement departments. Assistance is usually limited to occasional front line breakdown service jobs. Many private practices and specialist practices do not even have access to a Biomedical Engineering or Physical Measurement department for this basic support.
• We increasingly see situations where the lack of technical knowledge by operators is a limiting factor in the adequate calibrate of their diagnostic systems. Further there is often no policy adopted by the laboratory for an ongoing routine equipment calibration procedure. This can significantly compromise the measurement accuracy.

It is easy to see how this has come about. The standards and protocols in other clinical measurement sectors have developed over a longer period than that for which urodynamics and anorectal manometry has been a standard clinical procedure. Most clinical measurement monitoring is linked to life support so that the equipment calibration and operator training required is seen by administration as being critical. With urodynamics and anorectal manometry, this seems not to be considered as having the same importance, perhaps as considerable emphasis is put on the physical assessment by the clinician prior to final diagnosis, thus taking away some of the critical focus of the diagnostic test results themselves. However this should not be a reason to tolerate poor testing quality.

• Budgets for setting up laboratories are frequently limited to the capital purchase and it is difficult to raise funding for ongoing staff training and preventative maintenance. Often users require much more time than that allocated for teaching the operation of the products controls when the equipment is installed. Realistically, training personnel in the general use of computers, routine equipment maintenance, calibration and testing procedures requires considerably more training. Responsibility for routine safety testing, calibration, maintaining system integrity through preventative maintenance (all of which is to ensure that the patient test is of a high quality and to achieve laboratory efficiency) is often poorly defined.

Our Aim
It is our endeavor to develop and provide this unique Qualantee programme to address these and associated issues. It has the potential to be of considerable value to all carrying out urodynamics and anorectal testing. This programme is separate to the usual warranty and break down service. It is a partnership between Neomedix Systems (system developer, manufacturer and support provider) and the providers of urodynamics and anorectal testing in the clinical setting. We have structured the Qualantee programme so that the cost will represent good value.
Repair and Breakdown Service Contracts

These have always been available from Neomedix Systems and costs are in line with the standards of the medical industry. Depending upon the level of support undertaken they include preventative maintenance visits and can cover the cost of parts. They go part of the way to rectify some of the above mentioned support shortcomings. Regrettably they are rarely taken up by our users probably due to inadequate provision of operating budgets. Consequently, we are often unable to prevent the majority of problems which occur at inopportune times and sometimes with the consequence of users having to cancel patients tests. The latter is something which (for several reasons) we do not like to see happen. We genuinely work hard to avoid such situations but only a working relationship based upon preventative measures can significantly remove the risk of downtime.

Although these systems are recording pressures, flow and volumes, they are not necessarily doing so within specification. It is not only when a failure occurs that calibration checking and routine maintenance is required.

QUALANTEE programme

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This is a comprehensive and generalised type of support and may well be offered in combination with one of our conventional repair service contracts. The QUALANTEE programme will address:

- preventative failure inspection (but not including repair work)
- maintenance of system integrity (connections, computer set up etc)
- equipment safety testing
- training and support for the clinical measurement staff

We offer the following:

Equipment Calibration and Preventative Maintenance
- Full equipment calibration
- AS 3200 level of 'patient safety' checking
- Physical inspection routine for the complete installation

Computer Maintenance
- Install computer operating system upgrades whenever released by the systems computer manufacturer. This includes any system reconfiguration. The cost of this operating system software is chargeable at a discounted price.
- Hard disk maintenance (bad address mapping and data defragmentation etc.)
- file management review & clean up (often increases operational speed)
- Alignment & convergence test of printer (where appropriate).

User Support
- Review of technician operating procedures and give suggested improvements
- Free form question and answer time
- Retraining time (including showing new features)
- Uromac software customisation (settings & calibration files)

Reporting - Visit and Statutory
- Neomedix Systems will supply a written report on the Qualantee visit to the head of the department. This will include a copy of the recorded electrical safety test and system calibration values.
- We are prepared to work with your hospital to have this report meet individual quality assurance accreditation requirements.
- Any faults or defective parts found during the Qualantee visit will be reported but not rectified unless an order for repair service is supplied or if the equipment is covered under a separate breakdown service contract.

Responsibility of the Customer
- To ensure that the system and relevant staff are available to the Neomedix Systems specialist at the time, date and for the specified duration arranged for the periodic Qualantee visit.
- Neomedix Systems is to be advised of any known system abnormalities or requests for changes to system configuration or settings files seven days prior to the scheduled Qualantee visit.

Related Benefits
1. User Sites taking up the Qualantee programme will be eligible for discounts on consumables, software and services. An average urodynamics lab using external pressure transducers may well see these benefits amount to over $1,500 p.a. See Associated Discounts detailed below.

2. General user support communications will be more effective to both user and Neomedix Systems through the Qualantee partnership.

3. Our reports will probably facilitate easier preparation of your laboratories annual accreditation review documentation.

Proposed Charge

For three standard half day visits per annum. For sites in the metropolitan areas of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne the projected cost is under $5000. At this time costs for other cities and regional areas are subject to individual quotation. Payment is required six months in advance. There will be a formal review with the head of the department after the second visit and annually thereafter for feedback on the quality of the service provided.

Associated Discounts
- 5% off passive urodynamics consumable items
- 5% off active microtransducer tipped pressure catheter purchases
- 25% off any additional annual user training courses
- 5% off Apple® computer system software list prices (not the urodynamics application software).
- 10% off Neomedix Systems urodynamics application software list prices
- 10% off non-contract breakdown repair service labour charges
- Discount on repair service and breakdown contracts (details are subject to the type of breakdown service contract required). We offer three levels of repair service contract.

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