



Fig. 1 Development of (E)PHLS laboratory network 1939–65

(A) EPHLS Lab Network in 1939 (black: main laboratories; red: associated laboratories); (B) Laboratories in London sector under directorship of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS); (C) PHLS Lab network at time of PHLS foundation in 1946 (black: regional laboratories; red: area/local laboratories); (D) PHLS Lab network in 1965 (black: regional laboratories; red: area/local laboratories)

Source: Williams, *Microbiology for the Public Health*; Howie, *The Public Health Laboratory Service*.

63 laboratories over the next 10 years (see Figure 1). Coupled with the 1974 loss of access to MoHs, this was a first blow to the 1939 vision of public health laboratory services that were closely integrated with local epidemiological and clinical expertise.

Although the PHLS secured the reassignment of most its laboratory staff, the 1970s fiscal crisis and growing government emphasis on non-communicable diseases created competition for resources and pressure for cost-effective microbiology services.⁸⁹ In

⁸⁹P. Clark, "Problems of Today and Tomorrow": Prevention and the NHS in the 1970s', *Social History of Medicine*, 2020, 33, 981–1000.