



OUR MISSION IS TO BE THE LEADING ORGANIZATION IN THE FIELD OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE WORLDWIDE

eNewsletter



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September – October 2009 issue

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News from National Associations and Federations

45th Anniversary of the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics



Contributed by Professor Grazyna Sypniewska, Vice-president

The Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics celebrated its 45th anniversary on September 22nd 2009. It was a very special day for all of the Society members and invited guests. The ceremony took place at the Warsaw Medical University and was incorporated in the celebrations of 200th year anniversary of medicine teaching in Warsaw. During the opening ceremony Professor Dariusz Sitkiewicz, President of Polish Society and invited honorary guests, Rector of the Warsaw Medical University, representative of the Polish Ministry of Health, President of the Polish Chamber of Laboratory Diagnosticians and the Polish President of EDMA, had their welcome addresses followed by two scientific sessions.

Laboratory medicine in Poland, as a separate discipline, started in 1953 when the first National Specialist/Consultant was appointed by the Ministry of Health. At the beginning the Division of Laboratory Medicine was formed within the structures of the Polish Medical Society. In accordance with the charter of the Society the membership was restricted to physicians employed in the medical laboratories. However, physicians constituted approximately 15% of all the University graduates employed in the hospital laboratories. Hence, the Executive Board of the Division soon aimed to establish a Scientific Association for all professionals with higher education working in the field of laboratory medicine. Ultimately the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics was formally established in October 1964, during the 2nd National Congress of the Division of Laboratory Medicine of the Polish Medical Society. According to the new Charter, the Society is responsible of disseminating the knowledge on novel findings and on essential achievements in different areas of

clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine, of encouraging Society members to pursue postgraduate training in laboratory medicine and of supporting their research activities. Professor Jerzy Krawczynski was the first President of the PSLD (PTDL). During next years 18 regional branches of the Society have been formed.

Between 1964 and 2007 the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics organized 16 Scientific Congresses in different regions of our beautiful country. More than 1000 members, invited guests and representatives of IVD companies participated in the two latest Congresses organized in Mikolajki (2004) and Wroclaw (2007). The XVIIth Congress of the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics will be held in September 2010 in Wisla, the heart of Polish Tatra Mountains.

Professors J.Homolka, K.Masek, G.Siest, H.Reinauer, Z.Stolzman, W.Guder, V.Palicka, V.Blaton and E.Topic are among the non-Polish Honorary Members of the Society. The organization of the IXth European Congress of Clinical Chemistry – Eurolab 91 in 1991 in Cracow, Poland by the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics under the leadership of its President, Professor Jan Sznajd, was a landmark of the Society's achievements. The International Scientific Committee comprised 27 scientists from 17 different countries, the number of participants from 34 countries exceeded two thousands. The Opening lecture presented by Sir John Robert Vane, the 1992 British Noble Prize Winner in medicine for his seminal work on the inhibition of prostaglandin biosynthesis by acetyl salicylic, was a highlight of the meeting.

The Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics became a full member of IFCC as soon as 1969 and is a full member of EFCC. In 2001 professor Grazyna Sypniewska was elected as National Representative of Polish Society at IFCC; in 2007 she was appointed a position of eJournal IFCC Editor-in-chief within IFCC Communication and Publication Division and in 2009 – a corresponding member of the IFCC Working Group on Bone Markers Standardization (WG-BMS). National Representative of Polish Society at EFCC is professor Bogdan Solnica.

Four years ago a group of professors from the Polish Society of Laboratory Diagnostics, together with the Polish Chamber of Producers and Distributors of IVD, became involved, and still are, in the AACC project LabTest OnLine. They launched the Polish version in 2007, available at www.labtestonline.pl.

The Society also owns and publishes its official Journal *Diagnostyka Laboratoryjna* since 1969, which present Editor-in-chief is Professor J.K.Kulpa. The Journal publishes peer-reviewed original papers and reviews in Polish and in English.



From the left: Hanna Zborowska PhD– Secretary of the Society during the Plenary Session and Professor Dariusz Sitkiewicz, President of the Polish Society.

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor

Cyprus Adhesion to the European Registry

**Contributed by Dr. Spyroula Christou, Secretary & Cyprus National Representative of IFCC.
Association of Clinical Laboratory Directors Biomedical and Clinical Laboratory Scientists.**

The Cyprus National Committee for the EC4 Registry has been appointed a little over a year ago and the Committee members have rapidly come to an agreement with European Committee of the EC4 Registry for the equivalence of standards. This lead to the reception of applications from our members and their acceptance to become members of the European Registry.

The President of our Association, 2 other members and myself had the opportunity to attend the EuroMedLab Congress in Innsbruck where we were able to meet with colleagues from EFCC and IFCC and to participate to the EC4 Registry closed meetings. We found the Congress extremely well organized both at the scientific and social levels. Congratulations!

The present Executive Committee presently focuses its energy on 3 major subjects that are related to the new Cypriot legislation on the Clinical Laboratories, the National Health System and the accreditation of the Clinical Laboratories. Elections for the new Executive Committee will take place during January Annual General Meeting. The new Committee will take over profiting from a head start.

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor

News from the Ecuadorian Society of Biochemical Chemistry (SEBIOCLI)

Contributed by Dra. Cecilia Paula, President

The Ecuadorian Public Health Ministry enforced a national regulation in August 2009, that legislated the licensing of clinical biochemists to operate clinical laboratories, This regulation specifies that the professional able to direct a clinical laboratory must have a clinical laboratory degree as do clinical pathologists. This mechanism is the first to be given by the Public Health Ministry in the laboratory field.

SEBIOCLI will start a new cycle of External Quality Control for public and private clinical laboratories in late October, this program include blood chemistry. In 2010, SEBIOCLI will hold its 10th Annual Congress in conjunction with the 6th Congress of Clinical Biochemistry with international participation, and the 1st Congress of Alimentary Innocuity. This congress will take place from March 25th to March 27th at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Quito, ECUADOR. We invite laboratory professionals and IFCC member societies to this very important scientific event: <http://www.colabiocli.org/>

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor

News from Uruguay: Implementation of a standardization process for creatinine measurement in Uruguay

Contributed by Prof. Dra. Stella Raymondo, President of the External Quality Control Committee in Uruguay, National Representative, IFCC Member of EMD and eNewsletter WG

The National Program of Renal Health in Uruguay: Prevention and Early Detection of Kidney Disease ", coordinated by the Honorary Committee of Kidney Health (CHSR) has been awarded a Grant of the Research Committee of the International Society of Nephrology. The program includes the Creatinine Standardization project as a relevant aspect. The Committee on Standardization and Quality Control (CECC) in coordination with the Standardization Reference Laboratory in Biochemistry (LARESBI) of the Clinical Biochemistry Argentinean Foundation operates this project.

CECC, a nonprofit organization founded in 1987, is the only National External Quality Assessment Scheme in Uruguay. Currently, 125 laboratories perform their

control in CECC, based on the consensus value as target value. The LARESBIC is the only reference laboratory in the region. The Creatinine Standardization Project is based on the traceability of the creatinine determination to the reference method and reference standards.

The President of Uruguay has recently declared this activity of "National Interest" who has also invited all the Uruguayan laboratories to participate. Currently, two surveys have been made with 130 voluntary participating laboratories. The material sent was a pool of anonymous surplus sera from blood bank donors, without transmissible diseases, that were prepared with different levels of serum creatinine by means of artificial enrichment. These samples will allow determining the random and systematic errors of the Laboratories. The target values are issued by the Reference Laboratory of the Argentinean Foundation of Biochemistry with methodology traceable to the mass spectrometry / isotope dilution mass spectrometry reference method. The samples are distributed nationwide through cold chain over dry ice.

Uruguay, officially named Oriental Republic of Uruguay has 176.000 km² of surface, and is divided in 19 departments being the biggest distance from Montevideo to the farthest point not longer than 700 km. This allowed covering the whole country area with the frozen samples within 16 hours approximately. The most difficult step in this project has been sending the serum to the Argentinean Reference Laboratory, but we have achieved a very good level of coordination with the support of the Sanity of Frontiers Division of our Ministry of Public Health. Our experience shows that our country is the ideal setting to develop this type of project due to its special geographic conditions. Undoubtedly, the results of this experiment will improve the screening for renal disease in Uruguay, being the first pilot experience in the region.

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor

News from the Mexican Association of Clinical Biochemists XXXII National Congress in Clinical Biochemistry and LABEXPO

Contributed by Dr. Rosa I Sierra-Amor, IFCC National Representative

Boca del Rio, Veracruz, MEXICO, a colorful peaceful fishermen town, well known for its gastronomy as well for its beaches, hosted the XXXII National Congress in Clinical Biochemistry and LABEXPO from March 16–18, 2009. Boca del Rio has many historical monuments such as the City Hall, of white and colonial architecture, the Plaza de Armas, and the Church of Santa Ana built in 1776, the White House museum, where Agustin Lara, the famous composer lived, also called “El Flaco de Oro”, and where one can listen to his famous songs such as Veracruz, Granada, and many more.



There were 20 Pre-congress courses held at the University of Veracruz (Campus Mocambo) <http://www.uv.mx/mapaflash/index.html>. Topics were on Cytomorphology of major haematological diseases; Biosecurity; Basic techniques of molecular biology and clinical application; Identification and antimicrobial susceptibility testing of gram-positive and gram-negative bacterial; Validation of culture medium; Food microbiology; Human cytogenetics and clinical rationale; Potential diagnosis of body fluids; Immunology; Chemical methodology applied to criminality; Physiology and biochemistry of the blood chemistry; Coagulation; Immunohematology; Diagnosis of genital infections and sexually transmitted diseases; Forensic Genetics; Blood gases and Management and interpretation of the AMBC proficiency-testing program. Twenty lunch round-table discussions were also organized.

During the Opening ceremony, QFB Efraín Chavarría Ávila from the Pharmacobiology department, Basic Sciences Division, at the University of Guadalajara received the AMBC Award, sponsored by Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics, for the best thesis dissertation in clinical biochemistry for his work “Contribution of polymorphism G>A721 of ICAM1 in the inflammatory response to obesity”. The Laboratorio de Análisis Clínicos de la Facultad de Ciencias Químicas e Ingeniería de la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California received the The Dr. Moreira Award for the Quality in the clinical laboratory, and a recognition diploma was given to the Blood Bank laboratory of Chetumal, Quintana Roo from the Transfusal Medice State Center.

The scientific program that included the participation of national and foreign speakers from the US, Canada, the Netherlands, Argentina and Spain consisted of 3 plenary lectures, 19 symposia and 11 conferences and one round-table discussion. The topics covered a wide array of subjects that included among others: Nosocomial infections, Best practices in blood culture, Free-living amoebae, Laboratory of autoimmunity, the diagnostic usefulness of D-Dimer, Diagnosis and treatment in respiratory allergies, Paediatrics and maternal-fetal relationships, Assessing childhood dyslipidemia, Cases in pediatric toxicology, Impact of the consensus statement of international professional organizations on global standardization of HbA1c, Obesity and nutrition, Metabolic Syndrome, Breast cancer follow-up; Immunohistochemistry of nasal polyps in the respiratory disease due to aspirin (EREA); Clinical laboratory and aging process.



From left to right: Professors Daniel Ménard (Canada), Cas Weykamp (The Netherlands), Edgard Delvin (Canada) and Vijay Grey (Canada) visiting the archeology ruins of El Tajin, Veracruz in company of their guide.

The Lab Exposition was inaugurated by the Federal Deputy Beatriz Eugenia Garcia Reyes, Minister of health of Veracruz state, Manuel Lila de Arce, Mario Garcia Sanchez, President of the Congress, Ana Leticia Cazares de Maselli, President of COLABIOCLI, Liliana Betancourt, Vice Dean of the University of Veracruz and Angel Arzate Berlitz, from the tourism office of the State of Veracruz.

The AMBC thanks the university of Veracruz, the minister of health, and the city hall of Boca del Río for their support and enthusiasm in the organization of the XXXII National Congress in Clinical Biochemistry all sponsors that enabled this event to take place. The main sponsors were Abbott Laboratorios de México, AACC Nutrition and Pediatric and Maternal-Fetal Divisions, Asistencia Técnica y Distribución, Especializada (Atyde), Beckman-Coulter de México, Becton Dickinson de México, Bio-Rad, Carpermor, Dibico, distribuidor científico Pallach, Hospital Torre Médica, IFCC Visiting Lecturer Program, Laboratorios Licon, Laboratorio Dr. Moreira, Perkin-Elmer, Sarstedt de México, Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics, Uniparts.

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IFCC–Russian collaboration: Conference “Optimization of dialogue between clinicians and laboratory: Metrological aspects on quality”

Contributed by Prof. Lina Khorovskaya, Clinical Laboratory Diagnostic Department, Pavlov State Medical University



The St.–Petersburg Branch of the Russian Association for Medical Laboratory Diagnostics (SPbRAMLD) organized in St Petersburg on June 15th and 16th, a conference entitled “Optimization of dialogue between clinicians and laboratory: Metrological aspects of quality” with a simultaneous commercial exhibition “LabExpo”, in St Petersburg. The conference was dedicated to the 175th anniversary of the birth of Dmitry Mendeleev, who carried out much of his chemical research in St Petersburg. The conference received a financial support from the Russian Ministry of Health

Care and Social Development, and was held under the auspices of IFCC. IFCC speakers were Drs Anders Kallner and Tomas Brinkmann. The conference was happy to welcome Drs Barbara M. Goldsmith (President of the AACC), James H. Nichols and Nader Rifai who were cosponsored by the AACC.

SPbRAMLD, is the Regional Association for Clinical Laboratory Diagnosis of St.–Petersburg, Russia, and an Affiliate member of IFCC. This meeting joined specialists in Laboratory Medicine and Metrology from 3 professional organizations: RAMLD, IFCC and AACC. During the 2 day conference, 14 speakers gave wonderful presentations: two from IFCC, 3 from AACC and nine from RAMLD. There were more than 200 participants from 16 regions of the Russian Federation participating in the conference.

The conference wants to acknowledge the generous support from national and international (by their Russian offices) manufacturers. The main sponsors were OMB, Beckman–Coulter, Abbott Laboratories, EcoMedC, Olympus Rus, Labstory, Vital Diagnostics, Association of Medicine and Analytics, Medlacor, and Diakon .

Professors Tatiana Vavilova and Lina Khorovskaya, RAMLD leaders, with the support of the St.–Petersburg Office of Roche Diagnostics and the company Labstory from St.–Petersburg, organized the daily “School of innovations in the field of laboratory medicine”. These interesting activities were held daily after the main sessions in the context of the exhibition. The first day was devoted to questions relate to the use of POCT in emergency diagnostics and the second on discussions between practicing physicians, laboratory specialists and manufacturers related to analytical and clinical aspects of the measurements of glucose concentration.

The IFCC and AACC speakers brought education information about new laboratory approaches in clinical practice, including aspects of adding value and standardization procedures. Professor Vladimir Emanuel, President of the conference, lead a most interesting discussion concerning Metrological aspects from the point of view of Russian and International Regulations and standards. Dr. Natalia Muravskaya, the Russian Leader in Metrology, Deputy director of All Russian Scientific Research Institutions of Optical–Physical measurement from Moscow, described “New Russian Standards in the field of laboratory medicine” and Dr. Vladimir Suvorov, from the D. Mendeleev Institution in St.–Petersburg, made a

presentation on the interaction between metrologists and laboratory specialists Dr. James Nichols, Chair of the AACC POCT Division, described the new recommendations for POCT devices. Dr. Dmitriy Haine (Moscow), representative of the Russian manufacturing Company "Diagnostic System", proposed to continue the discussion during 2009 with the aim of using international experience in Metrology and Standardization and of publishing new POCT recommendations in Russian Medical Journals.

RAMLD, IFCC, AACC participants and representatives from different national and international manufacturing and distributing companies exchanged, during vivid discussions, their experience in Validation/Verification procedures for laboratory devices including POCT. This conference allowed participants to draw conclusions on the need of developing Quality Management and Standardization in Russian Federation in connection with International Standardization in Laboratory Medicine.

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IFCC Roche Travel Scholarship Reports

Myriam Jazayeri, Tarbiat Modares, University, Department of Clinical Biochemistry, School of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, IRAN



It was a great honor for me to accept the IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship 2009 to attend the 18th IFCC–EPCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine held in Innsbruck, Austria. I appreciate the IFCC committee, especially IFCC past president, Professor Jocelyn Hicks, IFCC president, Professor Graham Beastall, and the IFCC executive board for giving me the opportunity (IFCC–Roche award) to participate at the Euromedlab Innsbruck 2009 Congress. The support of the IFCC–Roche award allowed me to attend and present my research works entitle, "Induction of angiogenesis by the differentiated endothelial cells from bone marrow menseschymal stem cells" and "The effect of different buffers on diagnostic PCR method of HBV". Many of the sessions was very interesting for me in some research fields such as cardiovascular diseases, from stem cell to cardiovascular

therapy, proteomics and human diseases, autoimmune diseases, the stress response and intracellular signaling. I noted the novel progress of laboratory products technology at the exhibitions of the Euromedlab 2009 Congress. I was pleased to meet colleagues from around the world. As well, I observed Innsbruck as a beautiful city with marvelous views of the Alps and many historical places. Finally, I would like to thank the executive committee of the Euromedlab Innsbruck 2009 meeting for excellent management of scientific programs and the wonderful social ceremonies.

Khaled M Mohamed , Analytical Toxicologist , Assuit Chemical Laboratory, Medico-Legal Department, Ministry of Justice, Egypt

I'm a postgraduate student at the Chemistry Department, Alazhar University, Egypt. I'm working on a research topic titled "*simultaneous determination of tramadol and its two main metabolites in human urine by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry*"



I have been awarded IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship to attend the 18th IFCC-EFCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, Innsbruck (Austria), June 7th – 11th 2009. I am honoured to receive the IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship. This award facilitated my attendance at the international meeting and presentation of the results of my PhD project as a poster. It was a great experience for me to attend plenty of lectures that met my interests. As well as the meeting was a good opportunity to broaden my professional knowledge, skills and techniques, and to increase my ability, upon my return home, to help solve practical laboratory-related problems. I would like to thank the IFCC President, Professor Jocelyn Hicks and other contributors for selecting me to receive this award.



**Alma Barbullushi, University of Tirana Medical Center
"Mother Teresa", Tirana (Albania)**

First of all I want to thanks the IFCC Selection Committee that chose as a recipient of the IFCC Roche Travel Scholarship and gave me the possibility to take part in 18th

IFCC – FESCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in Innsbrück.

This congress was a great opportunity for a young physician like me to be in touch with the new developments in laboratory medicine. The many state of the art lectures and workshops will contribute without a shadow of doubt to my everyday practice and my research field.

The workshops on Haemolysis: Causes, Effects, Prevalence, Measurement and Solutions in Pathology, the Urinary sediment: An Update, Active B12 for Vitamin B12 status, Recent advance in the management of free Light Chain Disease, Systemic Erythematous Lupus and other scientific activities, were of interest to me and provided me with new thoughts and material for research and diagnostic tools.

The outstanding exhibits of several instrument providers were very helpful as I had the opportunity to see the newest auto-analyzers and cell counters, and to establish a communication with the representatives that will provide me with the latest developments in laboratory medicine. The Congress also allowed me to establish contacts with colleagues from other countries that have same professional interests as I.

As a conclusion, I may say that this type of scientific event is an invaluable resource to all physicians and scientists, young and senior alike. My participation to this congress will be significant in my career and in my contribution to future meetings.

The IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Programme (PSEP)

Contributed by Ms Joanna Pollak

I am presently a PhD student in the Department of Laboratory Medicine at the Collegium Medicum Nicolaus Copernicus University in Bydgoszcz. Thanks to PSEP Scholarship, which I was honored to be awarded by IFCC this year for six months, from January till June 2009, I had the privilege and pleasure to work with Professor Anders Grubb and his team in the Department of Clinical Chemistry and Pharmacology of Lund University in Sweden.



During my 6 months stay, I was involved in several projects in the field of biology of cystatins, mainly cystatin C. I have learnt new skills in the areas of electrophoresis (from casting gels and running them to running blotting methods, Ouchterlony's double immunodiffusion), chromatography (ion-exchange chromatography S-sepharose, HPLC, FPLC). I have also learnt how to perform Polymerase Chain Reactions (PCR) and how to perform expression and purification of proteins using different methods. I participated the project related to "Testing inhibiting properties of different drugs on cystatin C amyloid dimers and oligomers formation". I was also honoured to participate in the Euromedlab 2009, meeting of IFCC/IRMM Working Group for standardization of cystatin C in June in Innsbruck. My stay in Lund was very helpful for my scientific development and improved my knowledge about physical and biological properties of cystatin C.

Moreover, my stay allowed me to discover a new country, both from the working and social sides. It was an exiting experience to spend my spare time with friendly people in Sothern Sweden, admiring beautiful views and nature close to the sea.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped in my work. Especially, I would like to thank Professor Anders Grubb, Veronica Lindström and Gustav Ostner for guiding me through their projects and for their warm hospitality and for all that I have learnt from them.

I would like to express my gratitude to the IFCC (International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine) and especially to Professor Jocelyn MB Hicks and the authorities from Collegium Medicum and University of Nicolaus Copernicus for their support. I would like to particularly thank my supervisor Professor Grazyna Odrowaz-Sypniewska for supporting me in my application for the PSEP. Without her help, that project would not have not taken place.

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor

Letters to the Editor – Perspective: the “D after tomorrow”...

Contributed by Dr. Damien Gruson, eNewsletter Working Group Member
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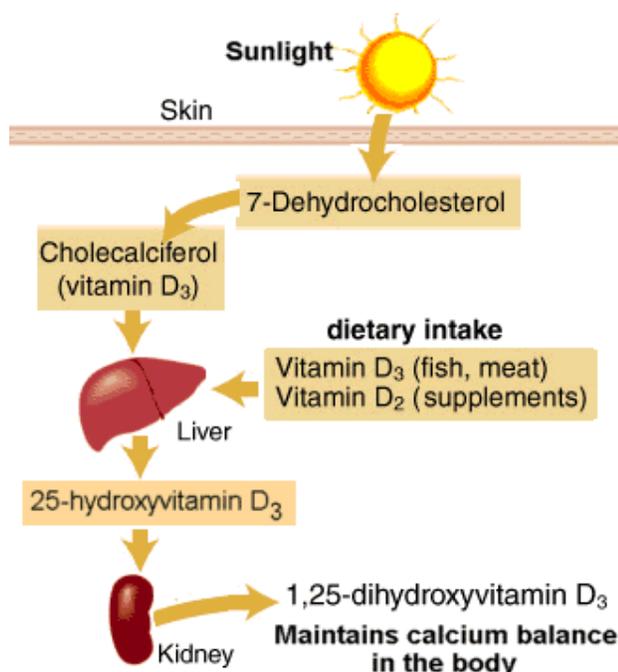
The “Day after Tomorrow” is a famous movie with Dennis Quaid where a climatologist tries to figure out a way to save the world from abrupt global warming. Reading of medical breaking news and “Medline” will stimulate attention of physicians and laboratorians to another warning which could easily prevented: Vitamin D deficiency. Indeed, important evidence exists now in “PubMed” about the link of vitamin D deficiency and the risk of future averse events, such as rickets, osteomalacia, osteoporosis and more recently enlarging to cardiovascular disorders and their

pathogenesis.

Therefore, the “D after tomorrow” could be the subject for another movie related to appropriate information about Vitamin D testing and actions needed if the levels are below the recommended thresholds. Of course such a good movie will tell the story of the potential hazard associated to patients with vitamin D deficiency and illustrate the central role of laboratories to primary prevention by an accurate determination of vitamin D circulating levels and as an important relay for large information to physicians.



Vitamin D is related to the family fat-soluble pro-hormones and exists in two forms: cholecalciferol (vitamin D₃), which is derived from synthesis in the epidermis, and ergocalciferol (vitamin D₂), which is derived solely from plant sources. Vitamin D must undergo two hydroxylation reactions to be activated in the body. Calcitriol (1,25-Dihydroxycholecalciferol) is the active form of vitamin D found in the body and which could be characterized as a mechanism of action sometimes called “steroid-like”.



(image from www.scientificpsychic.com)

It is well established that circulating 25-hydroxyvitamin D [25(OH)D] is a marker of vitamin D nutritional status and that its measurement as a clinical assessment of deficiency has become important in the management of clinical bone disease. The overall nutritional vitamin D status of an individual depends on endogenous (sun exposure, vitamin D₃) and exogenous (dietary intake, vitamins D₂ and D₃) sources and measurement of both forms in an equal fashion is very important. As the awareness about Vitamin D role has increased, the clinical demand for circulating 25(OH)D analysis has increased and Vitamin D appears nowadays as a

reliable contributor of primary prevention (*Primary prevention avoids the development of a disease*).



Over the last year, 2368 articles discussing about Vitamin D are reported in “PubMed”. Among those articles, 398 (17%) are related to “Vitamin D and prevention” and 473 (20%) to “Vitamin D and primary prevention”. Furthermore, 167 articles are discussing about the link between “Vitamin D and mortality”. A new emphasis seems to be place to the potential contribution of Vitamin D to cardiovascular disorders (176 articles related to “Vitamin D and cardiovascular”). A specific debate is running also about the role of Vitamin D and vascular tone and 78 articles over the last year are introducing discussion about “Vitamin D deficiency and hypertension”. A recent review about this subject published by Pilz et al. in Nature Reviews Cardiology is illustrating the need of Vitamin D measurement, its contribution to the pathophysiology of blood pressure diseases and cost-effectiveness of treatment and is concluding that *“in view of the relatively safe and inexpensive way in which vitamin D can be supplemented, we believe that vitamin D supplementation should be prescribed to patients with hypertension and 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels below target values”*.

It is confirmed that Vitamin D deficiency is associated to bone disorders and more recently to cardiovascular diseases. It is evident that Clinical Laboratories are key players for accurate the determination of Vitamin D and through their central place within healthcare and close links of information to physicians, will be major components for preventive measures to avoid deleterious consequences of Vitamin D deficiency.

Temptations and responsibilities

Many people are now familiar with the TV show “the temptation island” where couples are testing their love and compatibility, and try to resist to the young and beautiful girls and boys. The aim of this letter to the editor is not to judge the quality of this program or the ethics of its participants or to debate about the quality of the current proposed TV channels. We may

however conclude that something that is new, apparently beautiful and not completely known may represent a source of attraction of temptation, a phenomenon that is also valid for children.



Last July at the AACC meeting in Chicago, thousands of participants from all over the world attended the largest worldwide lab expo, and were exposed to thousands of assays and devices. This huge event, with high level lectures and many promises coming from translational research was held in the magnificent city of Chicago. For a congress participant, this moment is sometimes difficult to manage. Why? On one hand, he faces his responsibility of continuing education and learning, of finding new solutions for his laboratory, of exchanging experiences with colleagues. On the other, he is tempted to spend time to visit this city of architecture, art, and shopping, and pleasant walks close to the lake. But, with some professionalism and a well-organized agenda he can manage both activities.

Anyway, temptations and responsibilities is also a topical subject of debate for laboratory medicine in this (so well characterized) time of financial crisis (coming to the end? We hope). With a decrease in income for laboratories and biotechnology companies, different temptations may appear: temptation

to introduce clinically irrelevant and expensive assays, temptation to introduce controversial genetic testing without pertinent (sufficient) counseling, temptations to not performed full assay validation and definition of reference intervals, temptation of uncontrolled predictive medicine. In our world of communication and marketing, some of these practices may appear as rational . Indeed “temptation” is a theme common to many of the marketing and advertising techniques used to make products more attractive to consumers.

The missions of healthcare professionals must be associated with the word responsibility. Pressures and temptations may not alter their capacity of control and judgment and the difficult economical context cannot be a synonymous of “free buffet”. To resist to the temptations they must use their responsibility 1) to carefully evaluate innovative or new assays for their analytical and clinical qualities; 2) to remove from the laboratory tests menu old and irrelevant tests; 3) to think about and evaluate new strategies such as LEAN, Six Sigma and lab–automation to save costs, improve efficiency and remove manual forces to added value assays.

This sense of responsibility will have to be applied at the European level with a revision of the “CE marked” for IVD test and devices. The weaknesses in comparison to the FDA procedures are more than evident.

Laboratory medicine is a critical component of modern healthcare. Laboratory actors from public and private sectors, and governmental agencies should assume their responsibilities in this difficult period, and maintain a pertinent judgment of healthcare and laboratory services to resist potential temptations.

Edited by Edgard Delvin PhD, FCACB, FACB, Editor