



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

eNewsletter



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EDITORIAL

Editorial by Janet Smith, Chair : Education & Management Division



New Responsibilities for the Education and Management Division

It certainly does not seem to be a year since, as chair-designate of the Education and Management Division (EMD), I prepared an editorial for the May–June 2006 edition of IFCC News! A lot has happened in these intervening months and there are exciting times ahead for the EMD. In the autumn the Division called for nominations for a new member for its Executive Committee. There were several nominations from IFCC member organisations and I would like to thank all those individuals who allowed their names to be put forward as well as those who nominated them. Dr Stella

Raymondo, from Uruguay was selected as the new EC member and attended her first meeting in an unseasonably warm Milan in January.

After many years of taking the lead in the co-ordination and organisation of the Visiting Lecturer Programme (VLP), Dr Mary Burritt has stepped down from this role and Professor Leslie Lai is the new contact for this important project. I am sure that those who have been involved in organising VLPs in their own countries or who have been fortunate to hear presentations by the Visiting Lecturers will join me in thanking Mary for the hard work she has put into promoting the VLP, and providing expert advice to both lecturers and the societies hosting them. But more of the VLP later!

The imminent launch of a major new project by IFCC, a project aimed specifically to the promotion of external quality assessment (EQA) and accreditation in developing countries, will lead to new responsibilities for the EMD. The two strands of the initiative, EQA and accreditation, fall within the remits of two EMD Committees, the Committee for Analytical Quality (C-AQ) and the Committee for Clinical Laboratory Management (C-CLM). However, there are roles for other EMD committees, such as the Committee on Curriculum Development (C-CD), which now encompasses the work of the former Working Group on Distance Education, as well as other Divisions within IFCC. Because of the increased work associated with the project, a call for nominations for additional members of the C-CLM and the C-AQ will be sent to national societies and we will be looking to recruit individuals with expertise and experience in the fields of accreditation and in the support of EQA initiatives in developing countries.

We anticipate many different means will be used to help developing countries. A Workshop is planned for the ICC meeting in Fortaleza, in 2008 entitled "How to develop a Quality system", a topic which will be essential for any laboratory personnel seeking accreditation to understand and apply in their own laboratories. There are some well-established collaborations between countries where EQA is an essential component of routine practice with others who are just starting to introduce EQA. The EMD wishes to learn from these and promote similar collaborations in other parts of the world. To provide the knowledge-base, paper-based and electronically accessible learning materials will be developed.

To return to the VLP, the EMD is delighted to report that Abbott Diagnostics has pledged to provide generous financial support to the programme, for a period of five years. The level of support will allow expansion of the programme in the coming months and years and we anticipate that it will dovetail into the project for support for developing countries. IFCC Member societies have already been contacted and invited to make applications for VLP funding and we hope that programmes can be organised in all IFCC Regions. Programmes which involve collaborations between several member countries within a Region are particularly encouraged.

So, the Division has a busy, but I'm sure a very rewarding, time ahead. Its committees continue to organise and participate in workshops and symposia at IFCC scientific congresses and this year we have sessions on a variety of topics at the Euromedlab meeting in Amsterdam and the Asian Pacific meeting in Beijing. I hope that some readers of IFCC News will be able to attend these sessions and benefit from the hard work and expertise of our committee members.

FEATURE COUNTRY: SYRIA

Dr. Ghassan SHANNAN, BSc, PhD IFCC Treasurer, SCLA President



The Syrian Clinical Laboratory Association, SCLA, was established in 1974 when a group of enthusiastic colleagues decided to form an organization for private laboratories in Syria. During the last thirty years SCLA was able to establish itself as the sole representative of the Laboratory Medicine Profession. SCLA is consulted by the Syrian Authority including the Ministry of Health for all matters concerning the Laboratory Medicine profession. SCLA proposes to the Ministry of Health the tariff of laboratory tests and controls the implementation and adherence to the tariff.

SCLA runs and finances a Total Quality Management Programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Health; participation of Medical Laboratories in this programme is mandatory by law. A Continuous Medical Education Programme is also organized and executed by SCLA.

A scientific Conference is held every two years and several workshops, symposia are held every few months, some in collaboration with other medical societies.

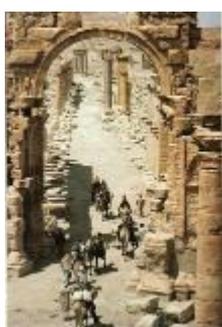
A journal is published by SCLA; the articles are published in their original languages, English, French or Arabic. The journal is recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education and the Syrian Universities. This journal publishes in addition to original articles, peer reviews and international and local news.

A website was established in 2003 which is used as forum for communications between the Executive Board and members at large.

The General Assembly is highest authority of the Syrian Clinical Laboratory Association. The General Assembly consists of Members of the Executive Committees of the 12 Syrian counties in addition to an elected number of representatives proportional to the number of colleagues in each county.

The General Assembly meets once a year at least. Any changes in the status and/or Rules must be approved by the General Assembly and then ratified by the Minister of Health.

The General Assembly elects the nine member Executive Board; President, Vice President, Past President, Secretary, Treasure and 4 members. The term of office for the Executive Board and the Executive Committees is four years. Elections start usually in the month of October of the fourth year of office and the new committees start their responsibilities in January of the following year.



Laboratory Medicine practice in Syria includes all disciplines, Clinical Chemistry, Haematology, Microbiology, Immunology and Blood Banking. However, to practice Laboratory Medicine in Syria, one has to have a graduate degree in Medicine, Pharmacy or Biological Science and a Master's degree or a PhD in one of the Lab Medicine specialities. Private practice in Syria is one of the major providers of Laboratory Medicine Services; in addition to the Public Hospitals which are run by

the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Defence. SCLA is an active and founder member of the Arab Federation of Clinical Biology, AFCB. SCLA hosted two AFCB congresses in 1994 and 2006. SCLA is also an active member of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine, IFCC. SCLA has participated in most IFCC activities and benefited from various services offered by IFCC including the Visiting Lecturer Programme. All Regional and National Congresses are held under IFCC auspices with active participations from IFCC officers.

About Syria

Jocelyn M. Hicks, President, IFCC

Syria borders Lebanon to the west, Israel to the southwest, Jordan to the south, Turkey to the north and Iraq to the east. The modern state of Syria attained its independence from the French Mandate in 1946, but it can trace its historical roots to 4000 BC. Its capital city, Damascus, was the seat of the Umayyad Empire and a provisional capital of the Mamluk Empire.

The population of Syria is about 19 million, of whom the majority are Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslims. About 16% are other Muslim groups and 10% Christians. Damascus retains a tiny Jewish population. Since 1970, the head of state has been a member of the Assad family. The current President (from 2000) is Bashar Al-Assad, a medical doctor (ophthalmology).

Historically, the name Syria arose from the ancient Greek name for the former colonial territories of Assyria, such as Canaan and Cilicia. Syria was divided into a number of provinces under the Roman Empire, each of which was politically independent of the others: Judea named Palestina in 135 AD (corresponding to what is now Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories); and Phoenicia, now Lebanon. Syrian civilization is one of the oldest on earth. Several ancient cities have been excavated, including Ebla (2400 BC), Mari, Ugarit and Dura Europos.

Syria has 14 governorates, headed by a governor proposed by the Minister of the Interior. Its major cities are Damascus (3000 BC), Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and Hama. Syria is a parliamentary republic and its views are largely governed by the Baath Party, although 6 other parties are also represented.

Economically, Syria is a middle income developing country with an economy based primarily on agriculture, industry and energy. Foreign exchange controls still hamper its growth, and the level of investments is low. Oil production has dwindled off, but it is expected that new foreign investment will increase production in 2–3 years. About a third of the land is arable. The state of the economy is reflected in the 20–25 % unemployment rate in a population of which 60% is under the age of 20y. Although the official language is Arabic, other languages (Kurdish, Armenian and Aramaic) are also spoken.

I had the great pleasure of visiting Syria last year early in my Presidency, and found the sites of Damascus, ancient Palmyra and Maóloula extremely interesting. The Syrians I encountered could not have been more welcoming and helpful.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Mexican Association of Clinical Biochemistry XXXth National Congress, León, Guanajuato, March 3-7, 2007.

Contributed by Rosa I Sierra-Amor, PhD, Past President AMBC

The Mexican Association of Clinical Biochemistry (AMBC), a full member society of IFCC and COLABIOCLI, organized the XXXth National Congress in Clinical Biochemistry at the Poliforum Leon. The main sponsors were: Applied Biosystems, Mexico, Asistencia Tecnica y Distribución Especializada S.A. de C.V. (ATYDE), Diagnostic Systems (DIASYS) Italy, Siemens Medical Solutions Diagnostics S. de R.L. de C.V., Becton Dickinson de México, S.A. de C.V., Bio-Rad S.A., Carpermor, S.A. de C.V., DiaSorin Mexico, S.A. de C.V., Estudios Clínicos TJ Oriard S.A, Laboratorio Licón, S.A., Laboratorio Dr Moreira, and Sanofi-Aventis. Several other distributors of In Vitro Diagnostics products contributed to the event.

The Organizing committee, composed of Martha Sanchez Rodriguez (chair), Mario Garcia, Ma del Pilar Cedillo and Carmen Melchor, together with the scientific committee, Ma Teresa Ramirez (chair), Jose Francisco Muñoz-Valle, Karina Chavez-Rueda, Domingo Sanchez-Francia, and Beatriz Nieva contributed to the success of this event. Connie Yerena, Isaias Sanchez, and Miguel Angel Gonzalez coordinated the Poster presentations.



Congress Organizing Committee: Martha Sanchez and Mario Garcia (in the center) with members of the Scientific Committee.

The Mayor of the city of León sponsored several social activities that included the Folkloric Ballet performance during the Opening ceremony, and a 'Callejoneada', walking and guided tour around the historical colonial city of Guanajuato located 25 minutes from León, Capital city of the Guanajuato State. During the Opening, there were representatives from the Minister of Health of the State of Guanajuato, from the government and from different universities and other organizations involved in healthcare and laboratory accreditation.

Immediately after the Opening ceremony, Rosa I Sierra Amor accompanied by the Minister of Health of Guanajuato State, inaugurated the Lab Exposition. A mariachi band accompanied the congress attendees to the lab exposition where industry representatives welcomed them in a warm and friendly environment full state of the art technology.



Get together at the Lab exposition

The scientific program included three plenary conferences: a) Alzheimer disease: models, updates and hopes; b) Seven years of experience with the 'Mexican Method' of allogeneic stems cell transplantation, and c) Uncertainty of the measurements. Other topics included quality assurance on POC testing; proficiency testing and external quality-assurance schemes, and challenges and success implementing medical laboratory accreditation, certification of professionals, international and national regulations, bioethics, food technology, pharmacy and informatics, bone biochemistry, infectious diseases, neonatal screening, transfusion medicine, HPV, AIDS, autoimmune diseases, diabetes and genetics, metabolic syndrome, among others. Round Table discussions topics on kidney function, hepatitis, mycology, torch, immuno-hematology, traceability, applied molecular biology, rheumatoid arthritis, etc., sponsored by BIORAD gave the opportunity to share experiences with the industry team leaders.

The students in Clinical Biochemistry held their meeting simultaneously to the Congress. On this occasion, Maria Antonieta Garza-Galindo, Past President AMBC (at center) was honored as Emeritus member, and recognized for her services and contributions becoming the first member awarded with the AMBC award for Services and Contributions to the Profession.



Maria Antonieta Garza-Galindo at center, AMBC awardee on Services and Contributions to the profession with two AMBC members.

Awards

The award for the best thesis in clinical biochemistry, selected by the AMBC and sponsored by Siemens Medical Solutions Diagnostic, was 'Comparison of two methods for the diagnosis of peritoneal infection in patients with Ambulatory Continuous Peritoneal Dialysis at the IMSS Regional Hospital no 25', by Ines Gonzalez Chavez.



AMBC awardee to the best thesis in Clinical Biochemistry, Ines Chavez Gonzalez and Magnolia Mendoza, from Siemens Medical Solutions Diagnostic

The Dr Moreira Laboratory award for Laboratory Quality Systems, given to high and low complexity laboratories was given to the Laboratorio de Analisis Clinicos Especializados (L.A.C.E.) from Tapachula, Chis and from Tijuana, BC., directed by Consuelo Chang, MS, and Laboratorio de Analisis Clínicos de Servicio a la Comunidad, directed by Elda Leal Orozco.



Consuelo Chang being congratulated after receiving Dr Moreira award for Laboratory Quality Systems by Rosa I Sierra Amor, Norma Gonzalez y Angela Susana Ramirez

The TJ Oriard poster presentation awards included topics on total quality, molecular biology, and education in clinical biochemistry, hematology, immunology, microbiology, and clinical chemistry.

The nine hundred and eighty congresses from all around the country who participated to the event in León shared experiences in a very warm and friendly environment. We look forward to the next year's meeting!!

Congratulation to the Asociación Mexicana de Bioquímica Clínica as provider of proficiency testing programs!

Submitted by Rosa I Sierra Amor, PhD, Past President AMBC

The Asociación Mexicana de Bioquímica Clínica (AMBC) www.ambc.org.mx obtained the recognition PEA-CLI-01 as provider of proficiency testing programs according to the competency requirements for proficiency testing providers (ILAC G13:2000) in the area of clinical chemistry. With this recognition, given by the Mexican Entity of Accreditation (www.ema.org.mx) on December 18, 2006, the AMBC becomes the first external quality assurance program in Mexico. The clinical chemistry area included 24 analytes/procedures that are: uric acid, CK-MB activity, alanino transferase, albumin, amylase, aspartate aminotransferase, total bilirubin, calcium, chloride, cholesterol,

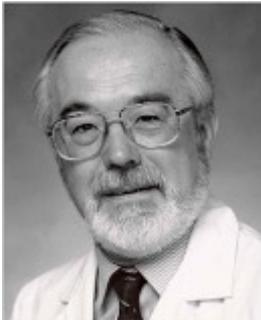
creatinine, creatinin kinase, lactate dehydrogenase, alkaline phosphatase, phosphate, gamma–glutamyltransferase, glucose, lipase, magnesium, potassium, total proteins, sodium, triglycerides and urea.

AMBC thus fulfills another step since 1985 after it provided the first external quality assurance scheme program started in Mexico through the IFCC Project Mexico (BIOQUIMIA, 1986; 8: 107–108) (BIOQUIMIA 2006; 31 Supl. A:124). The ABMC provides also other proficiency testing programs in urinalysis, hematology, bacteriology, parasitology and coagulation, and very soon will start the glycated hemoglobin program (Bioquimia 2007; 32 Suppl. A: 83).

Congratulations to the AMBC, the Executive Board, the Chairs and Working Group Members of the PEEC AMBC Digitalpt for this important achievement and for having internationalized the program and brought it to top–level.

OBITUARY MAY/JUNE 2007

Harold Richardson, MD, FRCPC, 1939 - 2007



Dr Harold Richardson, Emeritus Professor, McMaster University, died suddenly on February 12, 2007, aged 68 years. Dr Richardson was recruited to McMaster University from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne Medical School in July 1971, to establish the microbiology program for the new medical school. Dr. Richardson made many significant contributions to education, research and service during his 27 years with McMaster University and the Hamilton Regional Laboratory Medicine Program, including serving as Director of Postgraduate Education from 1982 to 1990 and Director of Medical Microbiology.

Over his career, Dr. Richardson held many provincial and national appointments in health care organizations. He was President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario in 1990 and President of the Canadian Association of Medical Microbiologists. In 1994, he was invested as a Knight of the Order of St. John by the Governor General of Canada, as a result of his volunteer work with St. John Ambulance.

In 1998 Dr. Richardson became Professor Emeritus with McMaster, and from 1998 until his retirement in 2006 devoted his time to the Ontario Medical Association as Director of the Laboratory Proficiency Testing Program, later QMP-LS. He was a member and vice chair of the Canadian Advisory Committee to ISO Technical Committee 212 and had responsibility for the standard ISO 15189 for quality and competence for Medical Laboratories.

Dr Richardson is survived by his wife, Dr. Mary Richardson, and his three children. At the request of his family, donations can be made in Harold's memory in support of postgraduate medical education at McMaster University.

LIGHT-HEARTED CLINICAL CHEMISTRY

Confused data bases

Information about the effect of drugs on laboratory test results is stored in databanks, such as the Swedish DECC comes from many sources and the output is often contradictory. Steps need to be taken to remedy this problem or unexpected consequences could result, similar to the event illustrated below.

The military headquarters for South Sweden is situated in my hometown of Kristianstad. On one occasion military staff sent out mobilising orders to about 3000 Swedes in the region, using names & addresses in their faultless database, as they thought. Somehow, the computer also decided to print envelopes to people registered as dead.

Thirteen people turned up on the day!

Recollected by Nils Tryding, IFCC Expert Panel on Drug Interaction 19xx - 1988.

UPCOMING IFCC RELATED MEETINGS

EUROMEDLAB Amsterdam 2007, 17th IFCC – FESCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, RAI Congress Centre Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2–7 June 2007. For more information please visit www.ams2007.org/

Canadian Society for Clinical Chemists Annual Meeting and joint Conference with the Canadian Association of Pathologists (CAP) and the Canadian Laboratory Medicine Congress (CLMC), 9–14 June 2007, Westin Harbour Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. For more information on the conference please visit www.clmc.ca.

American Association for Clinical Chemistry 2007 Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA, US 15–19 July 2007. For more information please visit www.aacc.org/AACC/events/ann_meet/annual2007/

44th IUPAC General Assembly that will be held in Torino. The information is available at <http://www.iupac.org/symposia/conferences/ga07>. The GA will be held 4–12 August 2007, in Torino, Italy, concurrently with the 41st IUPAC Congress.

The 15th Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF) Meeting, Antalya, Turkey, 4–7 September 2007. For more information please visit <http://www.bclf2007.org/>

Al 6-lea Congres National de Medicina de laborator cu participare internationala, Cercul Militar , Sibiu, Romania, 11–13 October 2007. Contact Person Dr Andreea Munteanu at andreea.munteanu@ralcom.ro Tel: +40 21 211 30 60

11th Asian Pacific Congress of Clinical Biochemistry (APFCB), Beijing International Convention Center, Beijing, China 14–19 October 2007, www.chinamed.com.cn/11apccb

11th Bergmeyer Conference: Markers of kidney diseases. Eibsee Hotel, D-82491 Grainau, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. March 3 - 5, 2008

IFCC General Conference for National Representatives and Corporate Representatives, Antalya, Turkey, 14–15 April 2008,

EUROMEDLAB Innsbruck 2009 18th IFCC–FESCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine 7–11 June 2009 www.innsbruck2009.org