



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

eNewsletter



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Message Editorial and Final Report

The IFCC President, Professor Jocelyn Hicks



This is my final report as IFCC President. It has been a great honour to serve the worldwide community in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. It was both very enjoyable and

challenging. I am going to attempt to highlight the activities of 2006–2008.

I have focused strongly on supporting the activities of our Divisions. They have done a spectacular job during these three years.

The Education and Management Division (EMD) has developed a Speakers's bureau to assist those areas of the world wanting to participate in the Visiting Lecture Programme. They have been involved with educational programmes in Analytical Quality and Evidence Based Laboratory Medicine, courses in Molecular Biology, and are putting emphasis on Laboratory Safety and avoiding laboratory errors.

The Communications and Publications Division (CPD) has published a new IFCC Milestones booklet as well as an excellent Public Relations brochure in many languages. CPD has worked with Abbott Laboratories on the "Labs are Vital" program to heighten awareness of our field to the public. It continues to publish IFCC News and the IFCC e-Journal on a regular basis.

In addition it maintains a list of all IFCC Publications.

Its biggest challenge and task has been in assisting the development of a new, greatly improved website that should be live by the end of November.

The Scientific Division (SD) has been extremely busy during these years. They have produced more than 50 peer-reviewed papers involving approximately 500 scientists. SD was very heavily involved with responding to the concerns of clinicians regarding the implementation of the reference method, nomenclature and units for the measurement of HbA1c in diabetic patients. There are 8 committees and 14 working groups within SD. These are working on a lot of different and important scientific fronts.

The Executive Board and I owe enormous thanks to the respective Division Chairs: Ms Janet Smith (EMD), Dr. Ellis Jacobs(CPD), and Prof. Mauro Panteghini (SD).

The Executive Board (EB) has developed a mission statement which can be seen on our website, and has set out the top 5 priorities for 2006–2008.

These are;

- 1) To develop integrated projects. The first of these is in pharmacogenetics.
- 2) To improve public relations to our Members and to the public
- 3) To emphasize education, especially in analytical quality

- 4) To assist developing countries more aggressively.
- 5) To better reflect the Laboratory Medicine part of our name

We feel that we have done well with goals 1–4, but need to work more on goal 5.

The Executive Board has been successful in obtaining support for some new programmes and for expanding existing ones. These include:

- A series of specialized conferences linking the Clinician and the Clinical Laboratory, supported by Ortho Clinical Diagnostics
- A greatly expanded and now very popular Visiting Lecturer Programme supported by Abbott Laboratories
- Travel Scholarships for young scientists from developing countries to attend our Congresses and Conferences, supported by Roche Diagnostics. You can read in this newsletter the level of excitement from the first awardees of this program.
- A Distance Learning Programme on the website for participants, particularly from developing countries, supported by Siemens Healthcare Solutions.

EB also contracted with AACC to make Young's Effects series available on-line free of charge to those from developing countries.

Some other areas of interest include:

- The number of Full Members has increased from 72 to 79 in these three years.
- Three more have been approved by EB and are now out for approval by our Members. Thus we will have 82 members in early 2009.

We had a very successful General Conference in Antalya, Turkey this year. This included active participation by our National and Corporate Representatives. Several suggestions from that Conference have been approved by the EB as new programs.

They include:

- Implementing Distance Learning
- Setting up a task force on working with other International Associations
- Having a working group on HIV testing by point-of-care.

The Task Force on Paediatric Laboratory Medicine held a successful Congress prior to the ICCCLM in Fortaleza, Brazil.

The ICCCLM was very successful with over 5000 participants. The next of these Congresses will be held in Berlin, Germany in 2011. The Committee on Congresses and Conferences selected Istanbul, Turkey for the following one in 2014.

Recently Four EB members visited Africa to establish their needs and to encourage more participation from Africa in IFCC.

I wish to thank the Executive Board for their support of me, especially in driving the assistance to developing countries. I could not have done my job without the help of all the officers of IFCC from so many committees and working groups

In addition, the IFCC staff has been extremely helpful and responsive at all times.

I wish Dr. Graham Beastall, the incoming President, a very successful tenure, and offer him my help and support whenever needed. He will do a great job.

Editorial: Dr. Graham Beastall, President Elect

Contributed by Dr. Graham Beastall, President Elect



I welcome the opportunity to introduce myself to the readership of the IFCC eNewsletter. I am honoured to have been elected to serve as your next President and I looking forward to the opportunity and challenge with enthusiasm.

Who am I?

I am 60 years of age. I am married to Judith and I have two grown up sons Richard (Management Accountant) and James (Orthopaedic Surgeon). I live in a 160 year-old farm cottage in the countryside, just to the north of Glasgow in Scotland. Apart from my family my hobbies are Scouting (I have been a member for >50y), gardening and support for Liverpool football club.

I was trained (BSc and PhD) in biochemistry at the University of Liverpool before becoming an academic in steroid biochemistry at the University of Glasgow. I switched to healthcare service provision in the UK National Health Service (NHS) and

became consultant clinical scientist to create and take charge of the Scottish Endocrine Laboratory based at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. I gained Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists (FRCPath) and became clinical lead for a large multi-site network department of clinical biochemistry that currently performs >15million tests each year. This laboratory is fully accredited to ISO 15189 standards with Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd.

I am a member of the Diagnostics Steering Group for the Scottish Government Health Department and I am also a professional advisor on laboratory medicine to the Government Department of Health in England.

I am a registered clinical scientist with the Health Professions Council in the UK and I am a registered European Specialist in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

I have published >170 peer reviewed research articles in biochemical endocrinology and evidence-based medicine.

I have served as Chairman and President of the Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB) in the UK. I have also served as Vice President of the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) and as Chair of the UK National External Quality Assessment Scheme (UK NEQAS) for clinical chemistry. At international level I have been secretary of the European Communities Confederation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EC4) and chair of the IFCC Congress and Conference Division. I was secretary of the committee that organised the IFCC Congress in London in 1996 and chair of the organising committee for EuroMedLab 2005, which was held in Glasgow.

I have been fortunate to receive a number of honours. These include: the ACB Foundation Award; the FESCC European Distinguished Clinical Chemist Award; the EC4 Distinguished Officer Award; Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; and Commander of the Order of the British Empire from the Queen for services to medicine.

What do I Hope to Achieve as President?

The elections in Fortaleza resulted in a strong Executive Board with excellent geographical distribution. There is also the benefit of continuity of involvement of

the current President (Jocelyn Hicks), Secretary (Paivi Laitinen), Treasurer (Ghassan Shannan) and Member at Large (Joseph Lopez). Taken in conjunction with the talented and effective leadership of the IFCC Divisions, Committees and Working Groups my first task should be readily achievable. That is to create and develop a harmonious team that can address the current and future roles and responsibilities of IFCC and to do so with ability, enthusiasm and commitment. I will use the analogy of a symphony orchestra. I don't pretend to be able to play all of the instruments in the orchestra but I do believe that I can stimulate skilled specialists to work together to make beautiful music!

My manifesto was developed after consultation and listening over a six month period. In summary it comprises building on the many good things that IFCC already does whilst also making the organisation more professional, transparent and respected in the wider international healthcare community. I would like to encourage many more clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine professionals to get involved with IFCC activities. To do this, my manifesto was built around five themes:

Theme 1: IFCC will work with its National and Corporate Members to lead innovative projects of international significance:

- *Expand the programme of scientific projects in areas related to quality standards, harmonization, standardization, evidence-based practice and knowledge management*
- *Collaborate with relevant international clinical organizations to develop and promote best practice guidelines for the investigation of metabolic and molecular disease*
- *Introduce a campaign to promote the contribution of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine to healthcare. This will include use of the "Labs Are Vital" programme and a focus on an increasingly informed public and patient-centred care*

Theme 2: IFCC will increase targeted support to its National and Corporate Members:

- *Expand the use of educational programmes to support developing communities to improve quality, management and accreditation in laboratory medicine practice*
- *Organize and promote international and regional congresses and specialist scientific meetings to support professionals in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine*
- *Share good practice procedures (e.g. through the use of LEAN and environmental audit)*

Theme 3: IFCC will improve communication with National and Corporate Members:

- *Invest in and maintain a modern, professional website as the centerpiece of IFCC communication. Link this website to all relevant stakeholders*
- *Introduce a dynamic electronic "forum" as a facility for immediate communication*
- *Provide regular news items and reviews in a format that facilitates inclusion in the newsletters and journals of Regional Organizations and National Societies*
- *Value the contribution of Corporate Members on scientific and practice issues*

Theme 4: IFCC will encourage increased local decision making and programme delivery:

- *Develop the role and responsibility of Regional Organizations as a means to involve more practitioners in the work of IFCC. Provide the resources to facilitate this action*
- *Increase opportunities for National and Corporate Members and Regional Organizations to input to IFCC strategy, programme content and delivery*
- *Create a culture and forum to enable the sharing of best practice across all IFCC operations. This will enable the Executive Board to complement the work of, and share responsibility with, National and Corporate Members and Regional Organizations*

Theme 5: IFCC will be more transparent in its operation and more accountable to its membership:

- *Publish an annual report and audited annual accounts*

- *Improve the corporate governance of IFCC and provide evidence of value for money*
- *Consult with National and Corporate Members and Regional Organisations to agree performance targets and audit outcomes*
- *Provide an opportunity for National and Corporate Members to meet with Executive Officers at least one each year*

Although this programme appears ambitious, we are starting from a high baseline, and the current Executive Board has already addressed several of these matters. I anticipate that the next annual report will show good progress against this programme together with the development of more specific objectives and action points.

How Much Time Can I Commit to IFCC?

I took a long time reaching the decision that I would run for President. That was because I was not willing to take on an important role unless I could commit the time that it deserves. Having been elected I have decided to retire from my consultant director role in Glasgow but to continue on a part-time basis as professional advisor to the UK government. I should have at least two days a week to dedicate to IFCC and I am confident that this will be sufficient.

How Can You Contact Me?

I am keen to engage with as many clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine individuals as possible. My mind and my email inbox are always open to new suggestions and constructive criticism. Contact me at g.beastall@googlemail.com
Tributes:

I should like to pay tribute to those members of the Executive Board who have completed their terms of office for they have left the organization in good health and so made my job relatively easy. Thanks go to Vladimir Palicka, Daniel Mazziota, Michael Thomas and Norbert Madry. Jocelyn Hicks has been an inspirational President and I look forward to working with her as Past President, benefiting from her wisdom and experience. My final tribute must go to Mathias Müller who has been "Mr IFCC" for more than ten years. Like everyone else connected with IFCC I

owe "MMM" respect and sincere appreciation for all that he has done to make IFCC what it is today.

News from National Associations and Federations

Report on the VIII Congress of the Catalan Association for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (ACCLC)

Contributed by Dr. Joan Nicolau-Costa, ACCLC Secretary and Xavier Fuentes-Arderiu, ACCLC President, and IFCC News Working Group



Xavier Fuentes Arderiu (left) – Joan Nicolau-Costa (right)

The VIIIth Congress of the Catalan Association for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (ACCLC) was held from March 6–8, 2008 at the University of Lleida (Catalonia, Spain). The topics covered the main areas of the clinical laboratory sciences, but special attention was given to genetics, prenatal screening, epidemiological population changes, new markers, and HIV as well as optimization of human and economic resources in the clinical laboratory. After the welcome speech, Joan Vias-Salas, Chancellor of the University of Lleida, presented the opening.

The scientific program included lectures, round table discussions and symposia. Posters were displayed during the congress and discussed in one of the sessions. The annual meeting of the association also took place there. Different companies related to the field had exhibits of the latest diagnostic products and laboratory technology.

The meeting attracted approximately two hundred participants from all over the Catalan autonomous region in Spain. The attendants had the opportunity to discuss a high standard scientific content on a wide range of topics.

The social program included a visit to the medieval city and a gala dinner,

giving the participants a chance to relax and socialize.

Since the foundation in 1995, and aside from other meetings, the ACCLC has been organizing a congress every other year to discuss current topics and promote quality practice of clinical laboratory science. Other activities of the association can be viewed on the website (<http://www.acclc.cat/>), where also the on-line journal (www.acclc.cat/invitroveritas) can be found.

Report of the meeting "The research in the field of in vitro diagnostics in Catalonia"

Contributed by Joan Nicolau-Costa, ACCLC Secretary and Xavier Fuentes-Arderiu, ACCLC President, and IFCC News Working Group

On June 13, 2007, The meeting entitled "The research in the field of in vitro diagnostics in Catalonia" organized by the Catalan Association for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (ACCLC) with the collaboration of the Catalan Studies Institute, was held in Barcelona on June 13th 2008. The aim of the meeting was to debate on the present state and the prospects of the research related to clinical laboratory sciences done in Catalonia by universities, in vitro diagnostics industry and clinical laboratories.

It should be taken into account that in Catalonia the autonomous government, the so-called Generalitat, holds the healthcare administration, but the Spanish government manages most of the scientific research budget.

Speakers first presented their point of view on the subject according to their personal experience. These were then discussed by all the attendees of the meeting and followed by a general discussion.

Pras. Francesca Canalias (Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Montserrat Portós-Vinyeta (Unity of Parasitology, Faculty of Pharmacy, Universitat de Barcelona) and Joan-Lluís Vives-Corrans (Department of Medicine, Universitat de Barcelona) were the speakers from the Universities. The speakers from the industry were Àngels Díez-Abad (Biokit, S.A.), Adolfo Gallego-Gutiérrez, (RAL, S.A.), and F.-Javier Gella-Tomás (BioSystems, S.A.). Finally, the speakers representing the clinical laboratories were Vicent Ausina-Ruiz (Microbiology Laboratory, Hospital

Universitari Germans Trias i Pujol, Badalona), and Jorge Ordóñez-Llanos (Biochemistry Department, Hospital de Sant Pau, Barcelona). In addition, Montserrat Vendrell-Rius participated on behalf of the BioRegió of Catalonia, a foundation founded by the Generalitat of Catalonia and the City Council of Barcelona. Xavier Fuentes-Arderiu (Clinical Laboratory, Hospital Universitari de Bellvitge, l'Hospitalet de Llobregat) coordinated and chaired the meeting.

At the end of the general discussion, participants were invited to reflect "at home" on the debate and to send their comments to the chairman. The following conclusions may be derived from the thoughts that emerged from the debate and from the individual comments received a posteriori:

- Most Catalan clinical laboratories experience difficulties in performing research and development activities because of the lack of resources and of the daily workload.
- The Catalan and the Spanish Healthcare Administrations are funding major infrastructures devoted to the biomedical research (the so called "scientific parks") but provide little help to research groups working on in vitro diagnostics in clinical laboratories or in the universities.
- The in vitro diagnostics industry usually establishes joint ventures with clinical laboratories to validate their products, but not for the development of new ones. These types of joint ventures are more frequently established with university departments.
- The in vitro diagnostics industry should have more scientific contact with clinical laboratories in order to establish lines of research to resolve real healthcare needs.
- The in vitro diagnostics industry seldom recruits qualified researchers.
- Presently, clinical laboratories belonging to university hospitals have the possibility of including in their staff a full time researcher recognized by the Spanish National Health System.
- Universities, industry and clinical laboratories should have periodical meetings to share ideas and projects, to optimize human and economic resources, and to

achieve better research in the field of in vitro diagnostics.

The following colleagues provided the a posteriori comments contributing to above conclusions: M. Alsina-Donadeu (Hospital Mütua de Terrassa), M. Basart-Arrut (Hospital de Santa Coloma de Gramenet), M.À. Bosch-Ferrer (Consorti Laboratori Intercomarcal), V. Esteban-Perlas (Dade Behring, S.A.), J. Miró-Balaguá (Hospital de Viladecans), C. Muñoz Batet (Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau de Barcelona), A. Padró-Miquel (Hospital Universitari de Bellvitge), M. Portós-Vinyeta (Universitat de Barcelona) and J. Trafü-Prats (Dade Behring, S.A.).

Successful 3rd International Conference on Quality for Latin America

Contributed by Rosa Sierra-Amor, National Representative IFCC, Member of the eNewsletter Working Group



The 3rd International Conference on Quality took place last June 27th. This conference was under the auspices of IFCC and several other organizations from Latin America: from Mexico: the Asociación Mexicana de Bioquímica Clínica, A.C.; the Federación Mexicana de Patología Clínica, A.C.; the Colegio Mexicano de Químicos Clínicos; from Uruguay: the Asociación Bioquímica Uruguaya; and from Ecuador: the Sociedad Ecuatoriana de Bioquímica Clínica.

The venue was the Convention Centre of the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS) Medical Centre Century 21st, in Mexico City. The conference was transmitted by Internet to 6 other countries in Latin America and 11 cities distributed throughout Mexico, in which more than 1 400 attendees had the opportunity to listen to the experts.

Among this year's list of cities in Latin America who joined this effort, are: Buenos Aires, (Argentina); Santiago de Chile, (Chile); Quito y Riobamba, (Ecuador); Panamá, (Panamá); Lima, (Perù). The following cities from México also joined the conference by Internet: Tuxtla Gutiérrez, (Chiapas); Distrito

Federal.Guadalajara, (Jalisco); Mérida, (Yucatán). Monterrey, (Nuevo León,.León); Guanajuato.Oaxaca, (Oaxaca); Tehuacan, (Puebla Cd. Valles y San Luçs Potosá, en S L P); ,Villahermosa, (Tabasco); Ciudad Victoria,(Tamaulipas); Veracruz, (Veracruz).

M Octavio Zendejas, Director of BIORAD Latin America, gave the welcoming message. Representatives from the organizing societies: Dra. Martha Sanchez, PhD, Vice president of the Asociación Mexicana de Bioquímica Clínica, Dr. Q. Ignacio Lizarraga, President of the Sociedad Ecuatoriana de Bioquímica Clínica, and Dra. Rosa I Sierra–Amor, PhD National representative IFCC were also present.

A day before on June 26th, and under the same auspices, we also had the opportunity to listen to Prof. James Westgard, PhD, from the University of Wisconsin (USA), who lectured in a Workshop on "Six Sigma for Quality Assessment and Improvement" His talk, that lasted 3 hours, attracted 300 actively participating attendees, much exceeding the expected number. The topics presented during this conference had a high academic content and were topical and up-to-date. The first conference on "The impact of quality control frequency on laboratory results" by John Yundt–Pacheco, PhD from Bio Rad Laboratories (USA), was followed by that on "Verification of Analytical techniques: case application" given by Gabriel Migliarino, PhD from IRAM, the Argentine Institute of Standardization and Certification. The third speaker was Xavier Fuentes–Arederiu, from the Hospital Universitaride Bellbitge, Cataluña, (Spain) who lectured on "The measurement uncertainty in laboratory medicine", and provided tools to better understand this controversial topic. Prof. James Westgard closed this series of excellent conferences by giving an allocution entitled "Quality Today: Myths versus Metrics".

We thank everyone for their support and energy to organize, once more, such a successful conference, targeted to the laboratories and for the healthcare professionals. The valuable contribution of the speakers to the success of this event, and the enthusiastic welcome received at the venues are incentives to make it happen again.

We also wish to highlight the contribution of BIORAD, a leader in quality control, that provided an opportunity to listen to experts and worldwide recognized

scientists giving their contributions to help us perform laboratory services with "quality".

Congratulations!



Prof James Westgard from USA, at the 3rd International Conference on Quality, Mexico City, Mexico



Prof. Xavier Fuentes Arderiu from Spain, lecturing at the 3rd International Conference on Quality, Mexico City, Mexico



from left to right, : Octavio Zendejas, Director BIO RAD Latin America, Martha Sanchez-Rodriguez, Vice president Mexican Association of Clinical Biochemistry, Rosa I Sierra-Amor, National Representative IFCC, Ignacio Lizarraga, President of the Mexican College of Clinical Chemists, Mexico City, June 30th 2008

Reports on the IFCC–Roche Travel Scholarship Awards for the 20th IFCC Worldlab Meeting, Fortaleza, Brazil from September 28th to October 2nd 2008

Contributed by: Dr Agnes Ivanov, Tartu university Hospital, Tartu, Estonia



Thanks to the Roche/IFCC Travel Scholarship Grant, I had possibility to attend the 20th International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in Fortaleza, Brazil from September 28th through October 02nd of 2008. It is important that the development of clinical laboratories in developing countries is performed by their own staff, and in a direction that is suitable to their local situation

This may be a problem for laboratories from developing country that will have to prepare for the accreditation based on international standard ISO 15189:2008.

Being assessor of the Estonian Accreditation Centre, the IFCC workshop "How to establish a quality system in line with ISO 15189" proved to be very and informative important for me. Dr. Lucia Berte, speaker at the workshop entitled "How to establish quality system in line with ISO15189" chaired by Dr Wim Huisman, asked us how quality management training was performed in our countries.

In Estonia a technical assessor receives a 3–day training on ISO 9001, 17025 and 15189, provided by Estonian Accreditation Centre. The participation to this training session provides everyone with adequate information on the "international" level of competence and assures the United Laboratories of Tartu University Hospital a good probability that the accreditation process will be harmonised at a level of quality management and competence similar to that of Zentrallabor Akh–Linz from Austria.

Prof. Sverre Sandberg chaired another interesting workshop on the role of evidence in laboratory practice. It made clear the importance that a physician use clinical laboratory evidence based guidelines for patient treatment and monitoring. Estonia counts 60 laboratories with different analysers,

measurement methods, biological reference intervals and medical decision limits. This creates a potential risk for the patients when the physician moves from one hospital to another and does not take into account that each has its own set of reference values and decision limits. Therefore, it is the responsibility of laboratory specialists to provide the attending physicians with appropriate reports that contain clearly identified biological reference intervals for the tests. In addition to the accurate reporting of laboratory results, the laboratory has the additional responsibility to ensure that the tests are correctly interpreted and applied, in the patient's best interest

I sincerely thank the IFCC/Roche travel scholarship grant organizers and I extend my gratitude to Dr. Jocelyn M B Hicks and Dr. Päivi Laitinen for supporting me in attending the Twentieth Triennial IFCC–Worldlab Meeting.

Reference

1 "Essentials of Clinical Laboratory Management in Developing regions". Wim de Kieviet, Elizabeth Frank, Herbert Stekel, IFCC Committee on Clinical Laboratory Management and Education and Management Division.

2 ISO 15189:2008 Medical laboratories–Particular requirements for quality and competence

**Contributed by Dr. Mabel Charles–Davies, Department of Clinical Pathology
College of Medicine – University of Ibadan, Ibadan – Nigeria**



My trip to Fortaleza, Brazil was a delight and worthwhile for many reasons. It was my first experience at a conference of member societies of the whole world, where I was able to interact with renowned Scientists from various parts of the world. I discovered that I was the only one from Nigeria. I had the opportunity of listening to the plenary sessions by Profs. Chiechanover, Müller and Kalil to which I had looked forward. The symposia allowed the enrichment of my knowledge in immunology, endocrinology, molecular biology and their interplay. I was also made alert to current issues in my field. I particularly

enjoyed the session on Clinical immunology: Allergy and Autoimmunity: New developments from bench to bedside. This rare opportunity has definitely improved my research strategies and will build capacity in upcoming scientists as well as enhance my academic abilities.

As the National Representative of the Association of Clinical Chemists of Nigeria (ACCN), I attended the 20th Triennial Meeting of Council on the 28/9/09 at Marina Park hotel and participated in the election of the new IFCC executive committee members. I also was able to represent the President of ACCN since he was unable to attend the conference at both the President's dinner and the meeting of Biomedical Journal Editors where useful deliberations were had. I also interacted with delegates from Kenya and South Africa on the proposed formation of the African Federation. The session on Laboratory Medicine in Developing Countries: Issues and Challenges, was quite instructive.

I was able to present my work on "The evaluation of some Breast Cancer/ Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Overweight and Obese Women" and to interact with the delegates that visited my poster stand. I was also able to attend the 11th International Congress of Paediatric Laboratory Medicine which took place earlier, on 26–28 September, 2008, where I also presented a poster on "The Interactive Roles of some Antioxidant Micronutrients and Reproductive Hormones in Nigerians with Sickle Cell Disease" and participated in various sessions which were informative.

In general, my experience in Fortaleza was nice with pleasant people everywhere. Communication was a problem because most people spoke Portuguese, a language I never heard until then, but I was always kindly assisted in understanding. I must say that the conference has impacted me positively as it has prepared me adequately for the upcoming seminar of the ACCN on 25th November 2008 in Ibadan as well as for influencing the organisation of our National Congress late next year.

Finally, the various social activities enhanced adequate interaction with people I would never have met.

I wish to thank the outgoing President, Jocelyn Hicks and her team for all the assistance given to developing countries during her tenure, and especially for

the privilege given me to attend the Worldlab Meeting in Fortaleza, which would have been impossible without the IFCC/Roche travel grant. I am also grateful to the President of the Congress, Ulisses Tuma for his good and great effort.

Contributed by: Dr Vinita Thakur, Consultant, Biochemistry
Department of Laboratory Medicine, BHMRC New Delhi India



It was indeed a great experience to attend the 20th International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, held in Fortaleza, Brazil from the 28th of September to the 2nd of October 2008 and to present my communication entitled "Neonatal screening for hypothyroidism in the Indian population: preliminary data"

It was a great honor for me to accept the IFCC–Roche travel scholarship 2008 that covered my congress expenses. It has also given me an opportunity to attend the meeting of the C–EBLM that took place in the Marina Park hotel on 1st October 2008 that was a great success.

I personally thank Prof. Jocelyn Hicks and Roche Diagnostics, for their valuable efforts to generate the financial support to scientists, mostly belonging to the developing countries to attend such an important meeting. This is greatly appreciated.

I would like to summarize the communication that I presented in this meeting. The presentation is based on the preliminary data obtained from the neonatal screening for hypothyroidism in the Indian population. The results show serum TSH levels of $< 10 \text{ } \mu\text{IU/mL}$ and fT_4 of $< 20 \text{ pmol/L}$ in normal newborn population. Two out of the 35 patients (5.7 %) were reported high serum TSH ($> 50 \text{ } \mu\text{IU/mL}$), karyotyping has suggested down's syndrome in these patients. The patients were advised to be under strict observation. The mode of delivery and thyroid status of mother were also factors affecting the thyroid profile of newborn babies. The study was well appreciated and praised by several senior scientists, known globally for their work.

The support of IFCC– Roche was a great help to the aspiring participant from developing countries who lack the support from their national societies and

other agencies. I hope that this kind of effort will be continued

I once again thank the present IFCC President Prof Jocelyn Hicks and Roche Diagnostics for bringing various beneficiaries under one roof by supporting them financially.

Contributed by Dr. Batool Shannan, University of Damascus, Syria



The IFCC/Roche Travel Award allowed me to attend the 20th IFCC WorldLab conference 2008 in Fortaleza, and has allowed me to benefit from the numerous aspects of the Conference.

Many of the lectures, especially the plenary ones, were well organized and the speakers were outstanding. Having attended a number of lectures that are of interest to me, I can say I have gained recent and up-to-date knowledge from the experts. For example, the Molecular basis of Medicine session was incredibly interesting. I teach a Pathology course during my work at a University in Damascus, Syria, and thus the clinical immunology session was of great help in keeping me, and my students updated with the latest technologies available. Other sessions also helped gain further insights into important matters, like those on the Accreditation lectures and on the establishment of a clinical laboratory.

Of course one should not fail to mention the "adventure" of experiencing such a country as Brazil. I know I may never have the chance to visit such an interesting place again. I have had a really good and beneficial time there.

I would like to thank the outgoing President, Jocelyn Hicks and the Executive Board of IFCC for the assistance given to developing countries to attend the

Worldlab Meeting in Fortaleza This would have been impossible without the IFCC/Roche travel grant.

Contributed by Dr. Rosan Acheme, Laboratory for Reference and Standardisation in Clinical Biochemistry of the Argentine Biochemical Foundation, La Plata, Argentina



I have been awarded a Roche/IFCC scholarship to attend the International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory of Medicine – Fortaleza 2008. Both the information found in the commercial stands and the scientific information of the conferences and symposiums were excellent. Due to the fact that I work at a Reference Laboratory (LARESBIC–Fundación Bioquímica Argentina), I was present at the conferences related with traceability and standardization in Laboratory Medicine, analytical quality and uncertainty measurement. All the topics were very useful for my work and I think the level of the speakers was excellent.

I am be very grateful to IFCC and Roche for the opportunity that they offered to me to be present at such an important Congress.

Contributed by Dr. Basak Celtikci, Department of Biochemistry, Hacettepe University, Faculty of Medicine, Ankara, Turkey



By attending the "IFCC WORLTLAB 2008" conference, I had the chance to meet with world-wide recognized scientists in my research area "Pharmacogenetics" that allowed me to further collaborations. I believe this experience had a positive influence on not only my scientific knowledge, but also my research, analytical decision making and communication skills. This conference helped me to keep up to date in my field. Moreover, I improved my ability to present my work, defend my experimental design and synthesize constructive criticism in a useful way for my future clinical research. Therefore, the "IFCC WORLTLAB 2008" conference strengthened my capability to undertake different research projects with self-confidence in my future academic life.

In this regard, I would like to thank the IFCC committee and the IFCC/Roche scholarship for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this magnificent experience.

I definitely hope to participate in IFCC conferences in the following years.

Contributed by Dr. Katerina Tosheska-Trajkovska, Department of Medical and Experimental Biochemistry, Skopje – Republic of Macedonia



Due to generous support from the Roche and IFCC who awarded me with IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship I had the opportunity to attend the 20th International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in Fortaleza, Brazil. For me, as young scientist from developing country, this Scholarship was unique possibility to attend this important scientific meeting. It provided me with opportunity to participate and discuss about different scientific topics, career development and future collaborations in a friendly and informal environment. Also it was great time to meet and make new friends. I had the privilege to listen an excellent presentations, both clinical and research-related, which helped me update and expand my clinical knowledge and meet other people with similar interests. This added a new dimension to my scientific work.

I would like to end by expressing my gratitude to Prof. Jocelyn MB Hicks as President of the IFCC who introduced this IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship for first time and I hope that newly elected president of the IFCC, Dr. Graham Beastall will support this in future.

I hope that I will have the opportunity to attend other Scientific Meetings sponsored by IFCC in future.

I wish the best of luck to future recipients of the IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarships.

Contributed by Dr. Jelda Teixeira, University Hospital of Liège, Belgium



The International federation of clinical Chemistry (IFCC) organizes every three years an international congress. This year, the 20th world congress took place in Fortaleza (Brazil) from September 28th till October 2nd, 2008. Thanks to the Roche/IFCC grant, I had the opportunity to participate in this congress, which contributed a lot to enrich my professional life. The high-level scientific program consisted of subjects of great interest (plenary readings, symposia, oral presentation of selected posters by young scientists, IFCC workshops, poster presentation, industry sponsored workshops, short communications, parallel sessions); most speakers were internationally known.

During the congress, I attended various scientific sessions on current topics: diabetes, molecular biology, auto-immunity, oncology, genetics, quality assurance, cardiac markers and oxidative stress.

On Wednesday, October 3rd, I presented a communication by poster entitled "Comparison of myocardial markers for assessing cardiovascular and all causes 3-year mortality in dialysis patients". This presentation reported results obtained in the department of clinical chemistry of the University of Liège (Prof. J.P. Chapelle) in collaboration with the department of Nephrology. I deeply thank to IFCC for this unique opportunity.

Contributed by Dr. Abderrazek Hedhili, President of the Tunisian Society of Biology, Laboratoire de Toxicologie, Centre de Assistance Médicale d'Urgence – Montfleury – Tunisie



I would like to thank IFCC and Roche to give me the opportunity to participate to the IFCC congress in Fortaleza. I extend my congratulations to the Brazilian Society of Clinical Analysis and the Brazilian Society of Clinical Cytology for the excellent organization and the success of the IFCC-Worldlab meeting.

My participation in this scientific meeting has allowed me:

- to appreciate a beautiful country and the friendly comportsment of Brazilian colleagues .
- to meet and contact colleagues from around the world,
- to appreciate the high level of the scientific program and interventions,
- to know the new progress in biology and technology,
- to contact and exchange ideas and experiences with biologists.

I strongly believe that the IFCC–Roche Travel Award is a unique and needed initiative to allow young biologists from emergent countries to attend such meetings during which state–of–the art diagnostic technologies and research results are presented, and to meet resarchers from all over the world.

Thank you for your encouragment!

Contributed by Dr. Chi–Ya Ka, National Cheng Kung University - Tainan, Taiwan

As a young master student in the field of medical laboratory science and biotechnology, I surely broadened my horizons by attending the IFCC–WorldLab



2008 international congress. I was so excited that I could meet scientists worldwide and exchange my points of view with them. I really had a good time interacting with people who are interested in medical laboratory medicine like me. It was fantastic for me to see and understand more how research really works outside my country.

I also received ample new and useful information from the scientific sessions. One of my favorite sessions was "Rise of Mass Spectrometry, Fall of Immunoassay?". I've been developing a new approach to accurate quantitation of indocyanine green (ICG), a dye to assess liver excretory function, with tandem mass spectrometry. This session gave me an outlook on the development of mass spectrometry, and inspired me with great ideas on future application to mass spectrometry.

This was my first time attending an international congress and it meant a lot to me. I think it's very important for scientists and students to step out and interact with each other. The IFCC–WorldLab 2008 international congress

definitely gave me the best opportunity! I also would like to thank Roche for the kind support of the travel scholarship. It was of great help to me. With all the support, I am sure that there will be more and more young scientists who are willing to participate in activities and scientific programs of IFCC.

Reports on the IFCC–Roche Travel Scholarship Awards 2007

Contributed by Dr. Esra Sahi, Department of Biochemistry, Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey



I'm a graduate student in Department of Biochemistry, Institute of Natural and Applied Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey. I'm working on a research topic titled "Genetic polymorphisms of apolipoprotein A5 in ischemic stroke". I have a profound interest in the roles of, apolipoprotein A5 and other proteins in atherosclerosis. Last year I attended the XV Meeting of Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF), held September 4–7, 2007 in Antalya, Turkey. I had an opportunity to present my research results as a poster in this congress and I have heard about the upcoming BCLF congress that will be held in Athens, Greece. I believe that XVI Meeting of Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation & 7th Hellenic Congress of Clinical Chemistry would be a valuable opportunity for me to increase my knowledge in this area of research and I can develop different points of view in this congress and better decide regarding the direction of my future studies. Thus, I applied IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship due to having no possibility to support the cost of travel and accommodation for BCLF congress as a student.

I have been awarded IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship to attend the XVI Meeting of Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation & 7th Hellenic Congress of Clinical Chemistry. I am incredibly honored to receive the IFCC/Roche Travel Scholarship as a graduate student. This award facilitated my attendance at the international meeting and presentation of my research titled "Association analysis of – 1131T/C polymorphism of apolipoprotein A5 gene in ischemic stroke" as a poster. It was a great experience for me to attend plenty of lectures that met my interests, and get a glimpse of different types of research during poster

sessions. As a biochemistry graduate student performing genetic-based ischemic stroke risk association research, BCLF always has various sessions that helped to get new ideas with the needs of the field. I would like to thank the IFCC President, Professor Jocelyn Hicks and other contributors for selecting me to receive this award. I am also grateful to have been in Athens with its exciting historical and cultural beauty.

IFCC DOCUMENTS & RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Compiled by Mario Plebani, Editor of the Documents

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