



e-NewsLetter



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September–October 2011 issue

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EDITORIAL FROM GRAHAM BEASTALL – IFCC PRESIDENT

Graham Beastall: President



Graham Beastall

Method Standardization and Harmonization

For several years IFCC, through its Scientific Division, has been a global leader in method standardization. Several projects have resulted in the production of reference materials, reference measurement procedures and international reference laboratories. Working with the diagnostics industry it has become possible to demonstrate traceability and commutability between these reference standards and the results obtained in service laboratories using commercial products. Method standardization has been achieved for a growing number of the most commonly performed analytes in clinical chemistry. A list of standardized methods is available from the website of the Joint Committee for Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (JCTLM), which is strongly supported by IFCC (www.bipm.org/jctlm).

This programme of method standardization will continue to be supported by IFCC. In addition, however, there is a growing realization that patient safety is being compromised by method dependent differences for many clinically important biomarkers. This is especially true in the developing areas of microbiology and molecular diagnostics. In many cases it is not currently possible to meet the exacting requirements of method standardization.

Consequently, a project has commenced under the leadership of the American Association of Clinical Chemistry (AACC). This project aims to reduce between method variability through harmonization rather than full standardization. A summary of the project and an explanation of the differences between standardization and harmonization have recently been published: Millar WG, Myers GL, Gantzer ML *et al.* Roadmap for harmonization of clinical chemistry laboratory measurement procedures. *Clin Chem* 2011; 58: 1108–1117

IFCC supports the harmonization project and is working with AACC and other international stakeholders to introduce a co-ordinated system that enable an increased number of important biomarkers to be considered for method standardization or harmonization. This is truly a project of global importance.

Further updates will be available through future issues of IFCC News. In the mean time if you have comments or suggestions then please direct them to Graham Beastall (gbeastall@googlemail.com)

LAB TESTS ONLINE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS: TEACHING THE WORLD WHAT WE DO

[Lab Test Online](#) had a birthday this year, and while there was no cake with candles, there was plenty of celebrating – and plenty to celebrate. The US site hosted its 100 millionth visitor in February, a Turkish version of the site launched in March, and AACC launched a mobile version for Apple and Android devices at the AACC meeting in July. Official anniversary festivities kicked off in May with a reception for Lab Tests Online editors attending WorldLab in Berlin. Representatives from 14 of the 17 Lab Tests Online sites heard AACC President Ann Gronowski laud their contributions to the cause of laboratory medicine, “Lab Tests Online has become a global phenomenon – a global standard for patient education – because of all of you. It has been your willingness to step forward to help give a public voice to the laboratory profession, and your commitment to supporting a model of patient education that has exceeded our wildest dreams, that has made it all possible.”

AACC continued the celebrations in Atlanta during its Annual Meeting with frequent acknowledgements of Lab Tests Online’s many partners and sponsors, large banners adorning the halls of the conference center, and two major events. At the first event, AACC recognized the founding editors of the original site who have committed thousands of volunteer hours to setting the standards for its award-winning content. A video of this event can be seen on the Lab Tests Online YouTube channel at <http://youtu.be/5833t7LB6OI>.

The second event, a banquet for national society presidents and other VIPs from around the world, featured comments about Lab Tests Online from AACC, IFCC, and other organizations. The poignant remarks of IFCC President Graham Beastall best captured the significance of the event. After telling two very personal stories about how “clinical chemists change people’s lives every day”, Beastall congratulated Lab Tests Online for showing the laboratory community that it was possible to deliver this message to the public at large. Dr. Beastall’s full remarks are available [here](#).

In looking ahead to the next 10 years, Lab Tests Online expects to continue to broaden its audience and to increasingly connect the need for health literacy with the desire for stronger doctor–patient collaboration and improved health outcomes.

A booklet commemorating Lab Tests Online first 10 years is available [here](#).

From the Latvian Society of Laboratory specialists

*Contributed by Dzintars Ozolins, MD, PhD,
President, Latvian Society of Laboratory Specialists*

Dr. Dzintars Ozolins



Importance of sexually transmitted infections underestimated as a potential health impact.

As demonstrated during the European Conference of National Strategies for Chlamydia Trachomatis and Human Papillomavirus (NSCP conference) in May 25–27, 2011, held in Jurmala, Latvia, there are, based on official individual country statistics and reported numbers of cases, huge differences in the apparent incidence of chlamydia infection in European countries. Evidence also suggests that in many countries the actual prevalence of chlamydia infection is substantially higher than official statistics.

As chlamydial infection is widespread in the population and largely asymptomatic, the number of infections detected depends critically on the number (proportion of the population) of people tested; whether people without symptoms are screened or not; the type and performance characteristics of the different laboratory tests with respect to sensitivity and specificity. Official statistics also depend on whether detected infections are reported, on who reports, on how complete reporting is (% labs; physicians reporting); and whether they are compiled at a national level.

The trends in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in different countries across Europe are likely to be influenced by the population the increasing movement between countries and the increasing fluidity of borders. It is therefore expected that common underlying factors would be associated with similar rates of infection in different countries in the region. The official statistics however suggest more than 50-fold differences in rates of reported Chlamydia cases by 100,000 population.

In this context, a vicious cycle occurs, which may be characterised as ‘if you don’t look, you don’t see’. In many countries, STIs are not recognised as a serious public health problem. Official statistics are unreliable due to lack of screening; inadequate surveillance systems and lack of reporting. In these situations, apparent infection

rates being low, the view is that STIs are not a serious problem while paradoxically actual rates of STIs may be high and increasing. In a context of diminishing state funding and deterioration of health systems and services in many countries, the motivation for physicians or microbiologists to report cases is low; and there is no time or funding to carry out secondary prevention (screening, partner notification).

This NSCP conference arises from the Project European Conference of National Strategies for Chlamydia Trachomatis and Human Papillomavirus–NSCP which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Public Health Programme.

Disclaimer: The author acknowledges that the views expressed in the article are not necessarily those of the IFCC.

The full Conference Report will be published soon on www.cthvpv.org Conferences mentioned below will develop achievements of NSCP conference.



Prof. George Drannik

The next International Conference of National Strategies for TORCH complex, Chlamydia trachomatis, and Human Papillomavirus will be held in November 15–16, 2012 in Kiev under the Presidency of Professor George N. Drannik, **President of Ukrainian Society of Allergology and clinical immunology.** Please visit www.iecclm.org to find information about the conference.



Prof. Harald zur Hausen

The 2nd European Conference of National Strategies for Chlamydia Trachomatis and Human Papillomavirus will be held in May 23–24, 2013 in Berlin.

The acceptance of Professor Harald zur Hausen, who shared the 2008 [Nobel Prize in Medicine](#) for his work on papillomaviruses and cervical cancer, to act as Conference President assures the high scientific level of the meeting. Please visit www.cthvpv.org to find information about the conference.

From COLABIOCLI

Contributed by: Pra. Dra Ana Leticia Maselli President COLABIOCLI

COLABIOCLI develops a Distance Learning Course on Quality Management Systems and Good Laboratory Practices.

Given the growing number of diseases that threaten public health and the need for accurate and reliable laboratory testing to be available in every country, the COLABIOCLI Committee of Quality, Educational and Scientific Program and Finance has mandated its Working Group on Distance Education to develop, during 2010 and 2011, a Distance Learning Course on Quality Management Systems and Good Laboratory Practices.

Two hundred young professionals and students participants, from 19 countries received training under the coordination of the Fundación Bioquímica de Argentina and the certification of the Facultad de Ciencias Químicas y Farmacia of the University San Carlos of Guatemala. This Distance Learning Course was developed in close collaboration with the PAHO/WHO Public Health Laboratory Services and it is based on the II Edition of the PAHO Curso de Gestión de Calidad y Buenas Prácticas de Laboratorio, (Course on Quality Management and Good Laboratory Practices) 2009, ISBN 978-92-75-33028-9.

This Distance Learning Course has allowed the improvement of the performance of the laboratories in patient care and surveillance as it enabled the participants to disseminate their newly acquired knowledge in the Region and thus facilitate the review of national regulations for Medical Laboratories and their operational accomplishment to meet internationally recognized quality standards.

The present COLABIOCLI Executive Board

The last General Assembly was held in April 2010 in Santiago Chile, where the Executive Board was reelected. The Operational Structure of COLABIOCLI, consist of an Executive Board. The Executive Board reelected during the XIX Latin American Meeting of Clinical Biochemistry celebrates in April 2010 Santiago of Chile. The officer of the Executive Board President Ana Leticia Maselli Guatemala, Vice President Norberto Cabutti Argentina, Secretary Angel Rodríguez, Guatemala, Treasurer ,Carolina Richter Guatemala, Members; Manuel Morejon Cuba, Loida González Dominican Republic, Graciela Queiruga from Uruguay



COLABIOCLI Executive Board: Angel Rodríguez (Guatemala) Secretary, Ana Leticia Maselli (Guatemala) President, Graciela Queiruga (Uruguay) Member, Loida Gonzalez (Dominica Republic) Member, Manuel Morejon (Cuba) member, Norberto Cabutti (Argentina) Vice President and Carolina Richter (Guatemala) Treasurer

From the Romanian Association of Medical Laboratories

Contributed by Dr Minodora Dobreanu – Past president RAML

The 6th Conference of the Romanian Association of Medical Laboratories (RAML) in Piatra Neamt, Romania, a success.

The main goal of RAML is to maintain and enhance high professional standards through improved laboratory policies and technology meant to support health care via laboratory research and good laboratory practice. The RAML conferences have acquired a reputation as the most prominent and efficient meetings in the national community of laboratory medicine, being a landmark of the development of this field in Romania and of active affiliation.

The 6th Conference of the Romanian Association of Medical Laboratories was held from 1st to 4th of June 2011, in Piatra Neamt – Romania under the leadership of Professor Eugen Carasevici, RAML President. 273 participants from public and private

laboratories attended the conference taking the opportunity to stay informed of the development of new laboratory technologies in compliance with regulatory requirements.

As in previous years, leading experts in the fields of Laboratory Medicine took part to the event. This year we enjoy the opportunity to have as distinguished guests members of the executive board of International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, Dr. Graham Beastall, IFCC President, Dr. Päivi Hannele Laitinen, IFCC secretary and Dr. Grazyna Sypniewska, IFCC Communication and Publication Division and eJIFCC editor.

The 7 plenary and 3 poster sessions of scientific program included topics from all sections of clinic laboratory activity, with a special focus on the technology development, instrumentation and laboratory management. Fully aware of the fact that the complexity of laboratory practice have had an impressive and rapid evolution, specific goals of the event was to increase knowledge in fundamentals of new molecular investigation, areas which show the tendency of becoming routine in our daily activity. Also Lab management and the place of Medical Laboratories in the process of translational medicine were subjects of concern. A prominent consideration was given to value added to Laboratory Medicine in the frame of managed care and quality management. The Conference was accompanied by a laboratory equipment and reagents exhibition.

From the Uruguayan Society

Contributed by: Dra. Ana-Maria Piana, Member of the IFCC eNewsletter Working Group

A consortium of Uruguayan health professional societies holds a meeting on glycated hemoglobin.

On July 30th 2011, The Uruguayan Society for Endocrinology and Metabolism, the Society of Diabetology and Nutrition of Uruguay, the Cathedra of Endocrinology and Metabolism of Uruguay, the Uruguayan Society of Clinical Pathology (SUPAC), the Department of Laboratory of Clinical Pathology, the Committee of Standardization and Quality Control (CECC), the Cathedra of Clinical Analysis of Faculty of Chemistry, the Uruguayan Biochemistry Association (ABU) and Bayer SA, Diabetes Division sponsored and held a meeting on glycated hemoglobin during which the attendees addressed the value of glycated hemoglobin in the diagnosis and follow-up of diabetes, the harmonization of measurements and quality control in terms of the National reality.

On September 3rd 2011, the Uruguayan Biochemistry Association (ABU), in association with the Centre of Nephrology of Clinicas Hospital, the Committee of Standardization and Quality Control (CECC), the Medical Federation of the Provinces, (FEMI), the National Fund of Resources,(FNR), the Clinical Laboratory of Clinicas Hospital, the National Programme of Renal Health, the Uruguayan Society of Nephrology,(SUN) and The Uruguayan Society of Clinical Pathology (SUPAC) has held a meeting aiming at acquiring a consensus on the role of total urinary protein in assessment and diagnosis of Chronic Kidney Disease. The Organizing Committee members met at the end of the meeting to write the recommendations and to plan the dissemination the information.

From CUBRA, Argentina

Contributed by Dra. Alajandra Arias, Pro Treasurer CUBRA

The Medical Confederation of Argentina (COMRA) and the Confederation of Health Professionals (COPROSA) hold the 1st National Health Congress.

On 8 and 9 September took place in the city of Buenos Aires the first National Health Congress, organized by the Medical Confederation of Argentina (COMRA) and the Confederation of Health Professionals (COPROSA) organized by the Confederation Medical, Pharmaceutical Federation, Confederation Biochemistry and Dentistry. The motto was, "Health Policy 2012 – 2020 – towards a policy of national consensus" Attended by special guests (speakers): Drs. Ginés González García, Aldo Neri, Alberto Mazza and Hector Lombardo, Mario Rovere, Francisco Maglio, Carlos Castrillón, Elías Hurtado Hoyo, William Williams, Jorge Gilardi, Ruben Tucci, Avellaneda Roque, Ricardo Aizcorbe, Dr. Carlos Navarro, Gustavo Mammoni, Cdor. Ricardo Bellagio. This meeting was honored by the presence of national and international authorities. Two plenary lectures were developed, present and future of health care in the public, private and social security and State Health Policy for the coming years. The workshops addressed issues such as, training of human resources for health: pre and post-graduate human resource management in health, financing of health care, occupational hazards and working conditions in each of the subsystems. At the conference talked about sawing off the Medical Health situation.

From the Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology

Contributed by Felip Antoja Ribò, Secretary of the Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology, Member of the IFCC Newsletter Working Group

Professor Francesca Canalías receives the Scientific Award from the Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology



Dr. Carmen Mar hands the award to Professor Francesca Canalías

The 2011 award winner of the Scientific Award is Professor Francesca Canalías, former President of the Education Committee of the SEQC, Professor at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Director of the Laboratory of Clinical Enzymology Reference (LREC). She is one of the few who are members of the laboratory network Reference Joint Committee for Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (JCTLM). She also has been member of the IFCC Committee on Reference Systems for Enzymes (C-RSE) from 2005 to 2011. The award was given to Professor Francesca Canalías, on May 26, in Ibiza (Balearic Islands), by the President of the Scientific Committee, Dr. Carmen Mar.

The Scientific Committee (Comité Científico) is one of the various sections involved in the Spanish Society (SEQC). Currently it consists of 19 committees and two working groups, each one with a chairperson and at least six members. They are engaged in drafting documents, organizing courses and conferences and developing monographs.

The Scientific Committee in 1999 created an award that bears his name in order to recognize the scientific activity and the contribution of a member of SEQC for the dissemination of scientific knowledge to the scientific community through the Society. The Scientific Committee decides the award, from some candidates that may be proposed by any member of the Society.

From the Vietnam Association of Clinical Biochemists

Contributed by Prof. Hoang Thi Bich Ngoc, President, Vietnam Association of Clinical Biochemists (VACB)

More than 300 delegates attend the X Annual Congress of the Vietnam Association of Clinical Biochemists in Do Son.

On August 19th and 20th 2011, in Do Son (Hai Phong province), the Vietnam Association of Clinical Biochemists (VACB) held its Xth Annual Congress in conjunction with Annual Scientific Conference of Clinical Biochemistry of Hanoi and Northern Provinces of Vietnam, to which more than 300 delegates of many provinces of Vietnam participated.

Prof. Dai Duy Ban, President of the VACB, chaired this event and conducted the election of the new Executive Board that will serve until December 2015. Prof. Hoang Thi Bich Ngoc was elected President (hoangbichngoc.hs@gmail.com); Prof. Pham Thien Ngoc, Vice-President and General secretary (thienngoc2001@hotmail.com), Dr. Tran Hoai Nam, Executive Vice-President (HoaiNamVThos@yahoo.com.vn)

Dr. Tran Huu Thang, Executive Vice-President of the Vietnam Medical Association (VMA), on behalf of the VMA, recognized and congratulated the new VACB National Committee.

The Scientific Conference included nearly 20 presentations in a wide array of fields in Clinical Chemistry such as Tumor Markers, Molecular Biology, Immunology, Proteomics, Genomics, Pharmacogenomics, Endocrinology, Quality Control and others. The scientific discussions were very active and cheerful.

The VACB Congress has outlined an interesting program for the 2011–2015 period: organization of the Golden Jubilee of the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the VACB (1963–2013) and active international cooperation.



Left to right: Prof Hoang Van Son, member of the Executive National Committee of the VACB; Prof Le Duc Trinh; Prof Do Dinh Ho, member of the ENC of VACB; Prof Bach Vong Hai; Prof Dang Hanh Phuc; Prof Hoang Thi Bich Ngoc, VACB new President; Prof Pham Thi Mai.



Dr. Tran Huu Thang, Executive Vice-President of the Vietnam General Medical Association (VGMA) (right) congratulated Prof Hoang Thi Bich Ngoc (left) – new President of the VACB



The Executive National Committee of the VACB

From the Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry – Clinical Biochemistry.

Contributed by A. Grigoratou, Eur Clin Chem, member of the scientific committee of Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry – Clinical Biochemistry.

Brief report on the 9th National Congress of Clinical Chemistry held in Athens in 2010

The Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry – Clinical Biochemistry, founded in 1989 counts more than 500 members. The report concerns the 9th National Congress of Clinical Chemistry that was held in Athens, from 7th to 9th October 2010 with many participants coming from all over the country. The program was of high quality and wide-ranged and included all the latest information about the scientific progress on Clinical Chemistry.

During the opening ceremony professor E Frangoulis presented the prominent and inspiring work of the late Professor K Sekeris. Professor M Pazzagli from Florence, Italy, gave the opening lecture on the standardization and improvement of genetic pre-analytical tools and procedures for in vitro diagnostics (SPIDIA project).

Lectures during the meeting covered a vast array of subjects such as: Special issues of quality goals and quality indicators in diagnostic laboratories, Mechanisms of the immune system and ageing, Medical applications of recombinant erythropoietins and analogs, Detection and clinical relevance of circulating tumor cells, The present and the future of Point of Care Testing –PoCT, The physiological and pathological process of the mechanisms of inflammation, The role of inflammation in metabolic syndrome, The present and the future of diagnostic testing (M Ferrari), Postmenopausal obesity.

Four symposiums dealt with new developments on the cancer molecular diagnosis (Hereditary breast and ovarian cancer, novel biomarkers for the diagnosis and the prognosis of cancer, the contribution of the diagnostic lab to clinical practice and personalized medicine); testing strategies on transfusion transmitted infections (The serological confirmatory testing in transfusion, Molecular techniques for donated blood testing, Global warming and blood-transmitted infectious diseases); cardiovascular biomarkers (Next generation cardiovascular biomarkers, Serum homocysteine and paraoxonase-1, Lp-pla-2, myeloperoxidase and gdf-15 in cardiovascular diseases). One symposium was devoted to the postdoctoral studies on Clinical Chemistry and Clinical Biochemistry in Greece.

The 9th National Congress also included two workshops. The first was dedicated to molecular diagnosis in modern clinical lab and the second referred to the importance of bioinformatics in molecular biology.

Two industry-sponsored workshops were included: one by Medimec and one by Abbott (Pathway/Lean & Six Sigma). An exhibition of equipment and reagents in the field of clinical lab was on display.

During the closing ceremony five women senior scientists, members of our society (E Anagnostou – Cacaras, V Ioannidou, S Kakari, A Sarandakou and I Fokas) were honored for their contribution in the development of Clinical Chemistry in Greece.

The 14th Continuing Education Course on “Analytical methods used in clinical chemistry labs” that took place on 9th April 2011 also in Athens, consisted of six lectures: The past, the present and the future of automation in the clinical lab, the evolution of reagents of automated analysis, Immunological assays, Chemiluminescence and HPLC-MS analysis.

From the South African Association for Clinical Biochemistry (SAACB)

Contributed By Prof Rajiv Erasmus, IFCC eNewsletter WG Member

Rajiv Erasmus



The South African Association for Clinical Biochemistry (SAACB) held a very successful annual meeting held at Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg from 1st to 4th September, 2011. Dr Remaley from NIH was the SAACB invited guest. Apart from Dr Remaley there were 4 other international invited guests. They included Ms Janice Gills, Quality Manager from RCPA, Australia and Prof Leonard, paediatrician from London. SAACB held its 2nd Council meeting and its annual AGM on 2nd September 2012. While the Council meeting was well attended the AGM was poorly attended. The president's report noted the various achievements that the SAACB has made in the last year. The key focus for 2012 will be to strengthen its relationships with sister societies in Africa, Asia and Europe

Two SAACB members (Professor Erasmus and Professor Matsha) participated in a research methodology workshop given to postgraduate students from the College of Health Sciences, University of Kwazulu Natal (UKZN). This workshop took place in Durban at the Westville Campus from 16th –18th of September.

The IFCC sponsored a course in Quality Management in Nairobi, Kenya. The course was held from 26th to 27th September and was a huge success with nearly 150 participants. There were participants from nearly 7 countries in Africa. 18 pathologists from Nigeria also attended this course and certificates of participation were awarded by the IFCC.

SAACB members are playing a key role in National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) activities. These include Dr Jaya George who is on the NHLS Point of Care Committee and Dr George van der Watt who is on the NHLS Standardization subcommittee. Dr Rhena Delpont and Dr Tsagaane represented SAACB at the Human Resource Planning Committee of the Ministry of Health of South Africa in Pretoria that was held on 8th September, 2011

The Human Quality Assurance Systems Annual Congress (HUQAS) will be held in Nairobi, Kenya on the 29th October, 2011.

The Federation of South African Societies of Pathology (FSASP) has nominated Professor Erasmus, the SAACB President, as secretary for 2 years.

The next FSASP meeting will take place in Cape Town from 27th to 30th September, 2012. This meeting will jointly be held with the Association of Pathologists of East, Central and Southern Africa (APECSA). The FSASP Organizing Committee is made up of: Dr G van der Watt (SAACB); Dr J Simpson (Microbiology); Prof A Abayomi (Haematology); Prof Erasmus (APECSA)

From the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

Contributed by Prof. Snežana Jovičić, Institute of Medical Biochemistry
Clinical Centre of Serbia, Belgrade; and Member of the IFCC eNews Working Group

The 7th IFCC Symposium for Balkan Region hosted by the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia in Belgrade dedicated to the standardization and performance of biomarkers

Last June, the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia once again had the pleasure to welcome colleagues to the 7th IFCC Symposium for Balkan Region, organized traditionally under the auspices of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC) and European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFCC) in Belgrade. This year, the Symposium was dedicated to the burning issue of biomarkers, entitled “Biomarkers: From Standardization to Performance”. Like in the past six years, many renowned lecturers marked this meeting.

Topics covered a vast array of domains from fetal life to aging and included among many other, the validation and development of biomarkers and to guidelines for their application, the definition of biomarker performance and clinical validity in terms of the marker’s diagnostic accuracy, prospective biomarkers in cardiovascular events, the non-enzymatic post-translational modification derived products as new biomarkers of protein aging, biomarkers for the prediction of ovarian cancer, biomarkers of fetal anomalies in first and second trimester screening strategies. Glycomics was also introduced as a promising source of new biomarkers as part of the experience from the Balkan region. The presentation on the importance of the European bio-banking infrastructure initiative for translational research was of high interest in the perspective of possible European multi-national collaborative studies in developing and validating new biomarkers using large databases.



Symposium lecturers during trip to Mokra Gora (from left to right): Aslan Diler, Grazyna Sypniewska, Bernard Gouget, Nada Majkić-Singh, Patrick MM Bossuyt, Sanja Stanković, Victor Blaton

IFCC YOUNG SCIENTISTS

“Mapping the Future of Laboratory Medicine for Young Scientists in Countries Represented in BCLF”

Contributed by: E. Konsta, Chemist, MSc in Clinical Chemistry, PhD, Scientific Collaborator in Second Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Hematology, ATTIKON General University Hospital, Athens, Greece

E Konsta



“A changing laboratory environment”

In Greece, there are approximately 500 laboratories in public hospitals and 2500 private laboratories (doing microbiology, hematology, biochemistry, immunology and molecular techniques). Medical doctors (biopathology), scientists (chemistry, biology, biochemistry, molecular biology) and pharmacists are being able to practice in the field of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine. In addition, in some laboratories, there are persons with academic (usually technological) education without post-graduate specialization.

In Greece, there is no officially organized training of the specialists in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine. In 1973, the Greek State passed a law that was introducing

the Clinical Chemistry specialty for scientists (chemists, biologists, biochemists, pharmacists; law 131/1973). This law is still active but was never implemented due to the strong opposition by the medical Biopathologists. The Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry–Clinical Biochemistry (GSCC–CB) via the NCCRC (Greek National Clinical Chemistry Registration Committee) decided to organize a voluntary specialists training (duration 5 years) for scientists and pharmacists. This training includes both theory and practice.

The theoretical education is based on the EC4 Syllabus. In its November 2005 meeting in Prague, after voting among the European countries, the EC4 Registration Committee decided that the standards of the Greek Register were equivalent to the standards of the European Register. A voluntary examination is organized by the GSCC–CB and the NCCRC on the content of the educational program. Success to the examination leads to a certificate of (theoretical) competence. It is estimated that more than 40% of the scientists who practice Clinical Chemistry in Greece, participated to this educational activity. It should be noted that more than 80% of the participants were ranked “good” or “very good” in the examination. Nowadays, this program is provided as an e-learning application and it is open for all scientists who want to follow the discipline of clinical chemistry. The written examination is organized twice a year under the responsibility of the Greek National Clinical Chemistry Registration Commission. The GSCC–CB encourages all the young scientists who enter the field of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine to follow this educational program and also to follow the on-the-job training according to the log-book provided by the GSCC–CB. The practical training is being realized by means of a “professional training dossier (PTD)” (Logbook). The PTD describes all the laboratory procedures that the trainee has to go through.

Today, the Greek Register counts 224 members, whereas 108 of them have become members of the European Register.

Reference:

The organization of an educational program for specialists in Clinical Chemistry by the Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry–Clinical Biochemistry, *Biochemia Medica*, 21(1): 30–7 (2011).

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Contributed by : Ghassan Ghafour MD; PPD diagnostics.



Often times we receive a directorship position as a reward and recognition for the hard work and effort we have accomplished. However, seldom does this appointment come with a handbook or any training to help navigate through this new position. Most learn on the job and sometimes at a heavy cost. In short, we need to quickly acquire new skills with minimal support. We also need to prioritize our time and energy very carefully in order to continue with successes and achievements.

Below, I quickly summarized what I have depended on for the last few years to help me make it happen.

The most important characteristic you need to attain your goals is leadership. Defining yourself as the leader of your team, and your willingness to carry on the mission of your team is at the center of what defines you as the leader, not forgetting that a leader must often take the lead from his team, and seek feedback and to ensure buy in and clarity for all in the team.

Next comes support. Your team needs your full support in order to follow in your footsteps. Support comes in many ways, define the proper support for your team, and make it your responsibility to ensure its availability to your team. This may be training, or tools to ensure they are capable of performing the job required of them, providing motivation, ensuring they are challenged, and have opportunities for growth.

Once leadership and support are established, it is on you to ensure that your team members share a vision. Do you know what the mission of your institution is? From that you need to develop a vision for your team. Make sure the vision is in alignment

with the overall mission, and make sure everyone is onboard. Define vision in a way that would help your team to be recognized as the leader in their field.

In a world void of interruptions, this is all very easy to do, but the reality, as we know it, is nothing short of daily seismic events. Focus becomes very important in order not to lose track and be steered away from your goals. Realities should be evaluated constantly, and adjusted as needed, in order to achieve the goal you have for your team. It may be hard to follow the plan as originally laid out, but accomplishments are far more rewarding to let the daily grind stop you from reaching your goal.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

11th EFCC Continuous Postgraduate Course in Clinical Chemistry "New trends in classification, diagnosis and management of inflammation" *October 22-23, 2011 - Dubrovnik, Croatia*. For more information please visit: www.dubrovnik-course.org

First World Congress on Water Channel Proteins (Aquaporins and Relatives) Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Discovery of the First Water Channel Protein (Later Called Aquaporin1) *October 27-30, 2011- Cluj-Napoca, Romania*. For more information please visit: <http://www.srml.ro>

Annual Assembly of the Swiss Society of Clinical Chemistry & Tri-National Congress of Laboratory Medicine "From Biomarker Discovery and Technology Development to Evidence-Based Laboratory Medicine" November 2-4, 2011 - Zurich, Switzerland. For more information please visit: www.congress-info.ch/sscc2011/

22nd ESPNIC Medical & Nursing Annual Congress *November 2-5, 2011 - Hannover, Germany*. For more information please visit: www2.kenes.com/espnic/Pages/Home.aspx

Journées Internationales de Biologie (JIB), November 8-10, 2011 - Paris, France. For more information please visit: www.jib-sdbio.fr

COLABIOCLI 2011 - XX Congreso Latinoamericano de Bioquímica Clínica *November 24-27, 2011 - Punta Cana, Rep. Dominicana*. For more information please visit: www.codobio.com.do

5th International Scientific CIRME Meeting “Standardization of Cardiac Troponin I: the ongoing international efforts”. November 30, 2011 – Milano, Italy. For more information please visit: <http://users.unimi.it/cirme/home/index.php>

XXIII National Congress of Biochemistry of the Turkish Biochemical Society (TBD) *November 29–December 2, 2011 – Adana, Turkey*. For more information please visit: www.biyokimyakongresi.org/

Fray International Symposium *December 4–7, 2011 – Cancun, Mexico*. For more information please visit: www.flogen.com/FraySymposium

ArabMedLab 2012 – 13th Arab Congress of Clinical Biology (AFGB) and 12th Moroccan Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine *2–5 May 2012 – Marrakech, Morocco*. For more information please visit: www.smccbm.org

XXXIII Nordic Congress in Clinical Chemistry. *June 12–15, 2012 – Reykjavik, Iceland*
For more information please visit: www.nfkk2012.is

6th Santorini Conference Biologie Prospective “Systems Biology and Personalized Health – Science and Translation”, September 30 – October 2, 2012 – Santorini, Greece. For more information please visit: www.santorini2012.org

EuroMedLab 2013 – 20th IFCC–EFCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. *May 19–23, 2013 – Milano, Italy*. For more information please visit: www.milan2013.org

APCCB 2013 – 13th Asian Pacific Congress of Clinical Biochemistry *November 17–20, 2013 – Bali, Indonesia*. For more information please visit: www.apccb2013.org

WorldLab 2014 – 21st International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. *June 22–26, 2014 – Istanbul, Turkey*. For more information please visit: www.istanbul2014.org