



SKKY

Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry

Clinical chemistry has long traditions in Finland. The first positions of laboratory physicians were established in the hospitals in Helsinki in 1928, in Turku in 1938 and another one in Helsinki in 1948. The first non-medical clinical biochemist position was created also in Helsinki in 1951.

The founding meeting of the Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry (FSCC) was held on February 22nd 1947. Before the formation of the society, an unofficial meeting was held to select delegates to the first Nordic meeting of laboratory physicians, i.e. clinical chemists and physiologists, to be held in Finse, Norway, in May 1946. In this meeting it was decided that a Society would be formed. FSCC was not officially registered until 1950.

The members of the Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry recognized early in 1960's the need for a quality control of analytical methods. A model for a continuous combined internal and external quality assessment was developed: each participating laboratory would use the same control sample in its internal quality control and common statistics of the results were given to each of them. The operation was launched in 1966 at the laboratories of the Helsinki University Hospital. The control sample used was bovine serum which was obtained from the Helsinki City Slaughterhouse. At the beginning of 1967, the laboratories of Helsinki City Hospital and some other Helsinki laboratories joined the control system and at the beginning of the 1970's efforts were made to expand the activity to the whole country. Gradually it became necessary to create a more stable system for quality control. For this purpose Labquality Inc was founded in 1971 in co-operation with FSCC, Finnish Union of Chemists, Finnish Association of Private Laboratories, Finnish Medical Association and Finnish Red Cross Blood Service. Professor Nils-Erik Saris was the Finnish representative to IFCC and IUPAC in 1964-68. This was an era of change within IFCC. The main task of IFCC had been to decide on the location of international congress of clinical chemistry every third year. IUPAC commission of clinical Chemistry had then a key role and same persons were members of the Executive Boards of IUPAC and IFCC. During an IUPAC congress in Prague in 1967 clinical chemistry had its own section within IUPAC and the role of IFCC became more active. IFCC was to implement IUPAC recommendations in clinical chemistry and to

actively enhance and develop this field. Several divisions were formed for this purpose. A new President of IFCC was elected during the Prague congress and a committee to write new rules for the Federation was appointed.

The members of FSCC had a significant role in both IUPAC and IFCC. Ralph Gräsbeck was appointed a member of the Expert Panel of Reference Values in 1969 during the congress of clinical chemistry held in Geneva. Professor Gräsbeck has been a pioneer in this field.

In 1980 the Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry embarked on building up contacts with colleagues working in the clinical laboratories of the Soviet Union. The activity scaled up, acquired a structured form and started to diversify. The project relied on the Pact of cooperation in the domains of public health-care, medicine and social security, signed by the two countries. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs appropriated the funding and marshalled the administrative coordination. The activity was formed by visits of delegations, consisting of a party of four to six laboratory professionals staying for a duration of four to six days in the host country. The visits were dedicated to seminars and visits to hospital laboratories, research institutes and to business enterprises manufacturing laboratory equipment and material. A further goal was to become acquainted with the education and training of the profession and to become introduced to individual laboratory executives. As expected, our delegations enjoyed the atmosphere created by the dexterity and good laboratory knowledge of the Soviet colleagues. These merits at least in part seemed to compensate for the financial difficulties that generally afflicted Soviet laboratories, apart from a few flagship laboratories. The interest of Soviet colleagues in cooperation was encouraging. The project was stunned in the early 90s by the reverberations stemming from the sweeping changes that took place in Russia.

The cooperation between the Finnish and Hungarian Societies started in 1974 in the form of the Working Group for Cooperation in the Field of Health Care and Medical Technologies. The working group was sponsored by the respective Ministries of Commerce and Industry and furthered the export of Finnish companies in the field. Individual Finnish researchers in the field increasingly participated in the annual meetings of the Hungarian Society from the 1960's to the 1980's. The President of the Hungarian Society, Professor Michaly Nemeth-Csoka, was invited to the XXI Scandinavian Congress of Clinical Chemistry 1988 in Kuopio. The same year a Finnish delegation paid a visit to the annual meeting of the Hungarian Society and a formal agreement on cooperation was made. The close cooperation was deepened over the years as an exchange of lecturers and invitations of Hungarian trainees to Finnish clinical laboratories.

On the initiative of Zophia Grodzinska, Nils-Erik Saris applied for export-promoting funds from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to organize a course on Frontiers in Laboratory Diagnostics for Polish clinical laboratory scientists. The funds had been originally reserved for China but had not been used due to the massacre in the Tien Min





Square. The course was held on February 11–22, 1991, with 32 participants, following one or both of the two one-week programmes on Immunoassay Techniques and Use of Gene Technology. The course contained lectures, demonstrations and excursions to laboratories and industrial companies (Labsystems, Kone Instruments, Medix, Orion Diagnostics, Pharmacia and Wallac).

Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry has actively organized annually two meetings for its members. It also has hosted major international congresses several times: the Nordic Congress of Clinical Chemistry in Kuopio in 1988, in Turku in 1998 and in Helsinki in 2008. Tampere was the host of the EuroMedLab 1995. The relations to international organizations IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) and IFCC (International Federation of Clinical Chemistry) were taken care of in co-operation of the Nordic societies of Clinical chemistry. The FSCC applied for the full membership of IFCC in 1962.

During the past decades, many members of FSCC have played active role in IFCC Executive Board, Divisions, Committees and Working Groups.

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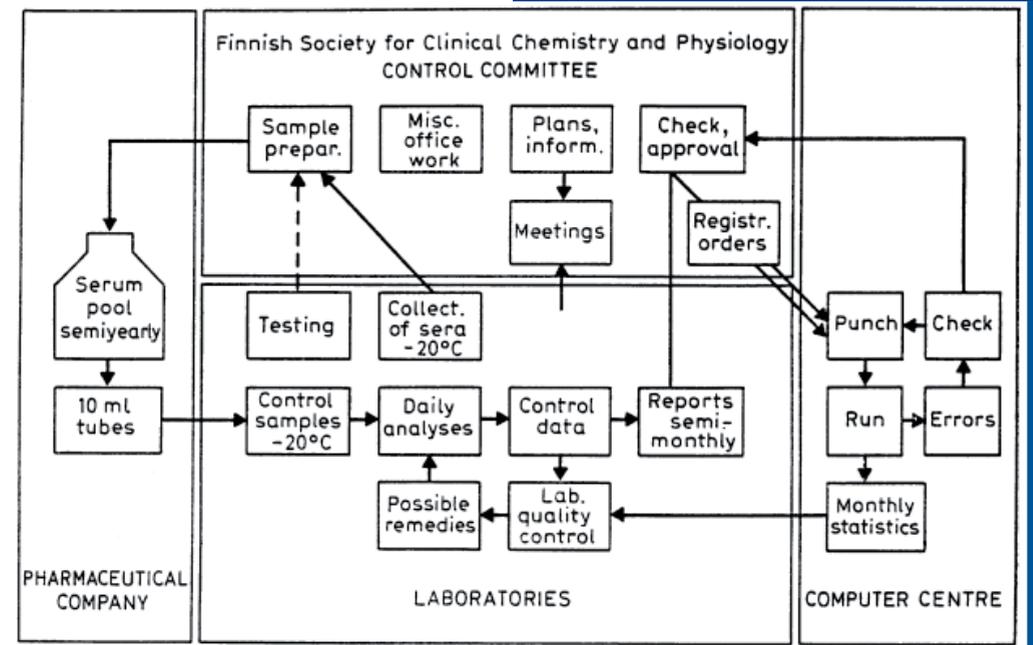


Photo 1. Schematic presentation of project Mansikki of 1968

Photo 2. Grand "old" clinical chemists Arvo Relander, Nils-Erik Saris, Heikki Simola, Paul Grönroos and Erkki Leskinen

