

**« AFCC- IFCC TFYS Session, Victoria Falls, 2015 »**

**29 April 2015, 9.00AM-01.00PM**

**“Challenges of Modern Laboratory Science – Training the Next Generation”**

**29<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015:** It is my pleasure to report on the success of the first **IFCC-AFCC-TFYS session** which held at AFCC 2015 Congress in Harare Zimbabwe. The theme of the educational and networking session was **“Challenges of Laboratory Medicine: Training the next generation”**. The session was attended by 29 young Scientists various regions as Australia (1), Botswana (1), Ethiopia (1), Kenya (2), Nigeria (4), Zambia (2) and Zimbabwe (18). The first session was chaired by Prof. Hilda Matarira, the AFCC Secretary. IFCC-TFYS Core Member and African Co-ordinator, Omolara Popoola, opened the educational and networking session with a welcome address on behalf of the **IFCC-TFYS Chair, Dr Pradeep Kumar Dabla**. She also discussed the Vision and Activities of IFCC-TFYS on behalf of Chair, IFCC-TFYS.

**Prof. Rajiv Timothy Erasmus (President Elect, AFCC)** was the first speaker and he talked about the Development of an Integrated Laboratory Management Program for Africa. He said the introduction of managed care business models to health care systems has transformed the practice of medicine and that skills in the business of medicine and medical informatics are also important in pathology practice. He also spoke on the need for Leadership/quality management programs and the current situation in Laboratory leadership in Africa. From situational analysis in Africa and the gaps identified in laboratory leadership developed a 3 month integrated laboratory management program was developed with the support of IFCC. He concluded that the course will assist the pathologist or scientist to achieve the characteristics of a manager.

**Dr. Omolara Popoola (Core Member, IFCC-TFYS)** was the second speaker and she talked about “Are we prepared to face challenges of Modern Laboratory Science? – Perspective from TF Young Scientist”. She talked about laboratory medicine in the past and present, the challenges we face as of today and the way out of the challenges. She talked about how IFCC is a major player in addressing the challenges of modern day laboratory medicine through the efficiency of the different committees and working groups. She also talked about how Young Scientists can participate and benefit from IFCC programmes such as the professional exchange programmes, webinars and distance learning programmes of the IFCC so as to improve the quality of health care in our various communities.

**Prof. Vaneesa Steenkamp (EB-IFCC, Chair: AFCCLabMed 2015)** was the third speaker. She discussed the vision and activities of IFCC in regard to Quality Improvement and Laboratory Harmonisation on behalf of **Prof Graham Beastall (Past President IFCC)**. She said accreditation is one of the rungs of the quality ladder and that many labs on the African continent are not accredited at all. She further described achievement of accreditation as a big jump and that we must also remember that accreditation is not a once for all issue but a continuous process. In her lecture she discussed the challenges of accreditation in Africa and that within the IFCC we have the DQCML that help with accreditation and holding workshops to assist laboratories get accredited. 'IFCC is aiming at getting all the labs accredited on ISO 15189 especially Africa' she said .She went on to explain standardization and harmonisation and the need for harmonization in laboratory medicine. She showed us some of the method harmonisation projects that are available and is being undertaken by the IFCC-SD and that as YS we should be involved. She ended up with how YS can contribute to quality improvement and harmonization overtime.

This second session on “ISO 15189: Practical experiences & Needs for Kenya and Zimbabwe” was chaired by **Itai Chitungo, IFCC-TFYS Co-ordinator for Zimbabwe**. The 2 speakers talked about the stepwise laboratory improvement process towards accreditation (SLIPTA) that is being rolled out by WHO and that it is intended to encourage, support and recognize the implementation of quality management systems(QMS) in medical laboratories in the African region so as to provide safe, timely and accurate results for patient care and public health purposes. The programmes involved include SLAMTA training and exit audit for laboratories.

The speaker from Kenya was **Francis Ndungu**, he works at the Nairobi hospital and is the quality manager in the Clinical Chemistry Laboratory. The Nairobi hospital was the first to seek ISO15189 accreditation in Kenya. He talked about the experience they had at the Nairobi Hospital and his experience as a SLIPTA assessor. He narrated how it took them eight years to achieve ISO 15189 accreditation but that they never gave up. He explained that the benefits of accreditation to the hospital include substantial improvement in TAT and customer satisfaction index among others. One of the things that made them achieve accreditation was team approach with other health workers. He said Kenya has over 70 laboratories that are undergoing the SLMTA programme since 2010 however only 3 labs

have been accredited and that there is still a lot to be done. He lamented that one of the challenges of accreditation in Kenya is that most labs undergoing the SLIPTA programme stagnate Post SLMTA due to weak quality management systems (QMS). He talked about the way forward and amongst these is that management and local government support is key to improvement.

The last speaker was **Sibongile Zimuto** .She is the director of Zimbabwe National Quality Assurance Programme (ZINQAP). She shared with YS about their experience in Zimbabwe in strengthening the lab quality systems. ZINQAP offers proficiency testing service as well as training and mentorship on ISO 15189 so as to assist medical laboratories and testing sites attain and maintain quality. They realized that the embedded mentor approach but not the three workshop series of SLMTA was the best approach for Zimbabwean setting; involvement of all laboratory staff is key to achievement of accreditation. They found that one of the biggest challenges particularly for the public sector labs was the procurement and supply management system. A major lesson learnt from the whole process in Zimbabwe was that if they are to strengthen the labs they really need to have management support. In conclusion both the Kenyan and Zimbabwean speakers acknowledged that the achievement of accreditation and quality systems is a continuous journey and we must keep moving.

The session ended with Omolara Popoola encouraging young scientists to get involved in the IFCC-YS activities especially at the local level. She concluded the session with a vote of thanks to appreciate IFCC, AFCC, ZACB and the speakers at the event.

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