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## REFLECTIONS ON 2012 BY DR. GRAHAM BEASTALL, IFCC PRESIDENT

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### INTRODUCTION:

Maybe it is a sign of my age but the year 2012 appears to have passed very quickly.

Outside of IFCC it has been a challenging year for many laboratory medicine specialists, especially those working in economies that are still affected by the global financial crisis. Laboratory medicine always seems to be at the 'sharp end' when savings are being sought in healthcare. Within IFCC, however, it has been another great year of progress.

### MEMBERSHIP:

Yet again we have increased IFCC membership to a new high. During the year we welcomed three new Full Members (Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kazakhstan); one new Affiliate Member (Mexico) and five new Corporate Members.

### **DIAMOND JUBILEE:**

The year 2012 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of IFCC and we have had some 'low key' celebrations. A special logo has been used throughout the year; a Powerpoint presentation has been produced together with a number of posters to mark the milestones in IFCC history. A birthday dinner was held at the IFCC General Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

### **ACTIVITIES:**

The new Executive Board settled in quickly and produced a strategic plan for the three years of its operation. The full strategic plan is available from the IFCC website ([www.ifcc.org](http://www.ifcc.org)) but there are 26 specific action points across the following four areas:

- Supporting our membership
- Broadening our horizons
- Improving quality of laboratory medicine
- Improving IFCC effectiveness

This plan is reviewed at every meeting of the Executive Board and good progress is being made.

Among the activities launched in 2012 there has been encouraging progress from;

- Task Force on point of care testing
- Task Force on the impact of laboratory medicine on clinical management and outcomes
- Committee on distance learning

We can expect to see evidence of their endeavours during 2013.

The ongoing activities of IFCC have been productive during 2012 with a series of scientific publications and courses run in support of the membership. These will be reported in full in the annual report, which will be available in the Spring of 2013.

### **CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES:**

2012 was the 'quiet year' in IFCC congresses with just one Regional Congress taking place. This was successful the Arab Federation congress, which was held in Marrakech, Morocco. In addition, the high level IFCC-Roche Bergmeyer conference on Vitamin D took place in Germany in March. IFCC signed an agreement with Abbott to co-sponsor the 'Turning Science into Caring' series of conferences, one of which was held in Shanghai in October. Most Full and Affiliate Members hold an annual conference and IFCC is often invited to participate. During 2012 I attended six national conferences from IFCC members and I represented IFCC at a further six conferences held in partnership with other organisations. My retirement project is to write a book entitled 'airports I have visited'.

### **THE VALUE OF LABORATORY MEDICINE:**

In order to prevent laboratory medicine from becoming a 'soft target' for cuts it is necessary for our specialists to provide leadership. We must deliver a high quality product and then add value to demonstrate clinical and cost effectiveness. During 2012 I presented my 'adding value' talk on many occasions. Finally, I have got around to putting it into a publication, which will appear shortly in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. IFCC intends to follow this up in 2013 by collating examples of good practice in adding value

### **THANKS:**

Once again I offer my sincere thanks to the >200 people who work on a voluntary basis for IFCC in Divisions, Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups. This work is performed outside normal working hours. It commonly involves weekends and may entail long journeys at the back of an aeroplane. The reward comes in the international networking and in the publications, products and courses that contribute to improving the quality of laboratory medicine worldwide. Without our volunteers IFCC would have little impact.

I wish to offer specific thanks to those volunteers who complete their term of office at the end of 2012. They include Stella Raymondo and Rolf Hinzmann from the Education and Management Division. Ellis Jacobs steps down after six productive years as Chair of the Communications and Publications Division. Finally, I thank Edgard Delvin who will produce his last edition of IFCC News.

In closing I wish every member of the 'IFCC family' season's a happy and relaxing festive season and a peaceful and productive 2013.

## **REPORT ON THE IFCC GENERAL CONFERENCE 2012-11-29**

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### ***Dr. Graham Beastall, IFCC President***

More than 170 delegates from 58 countries gathered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in late November for the IFCC General Conference (Photo 1). This event occurs once every three years and is an opportunity for the 'family of IFCC' to gather together to share knowledge and experiences. The General Conference is open to those who work for IFCC Divisions, Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups together with National Representatives from Full and Affiliate Members and Corporate Members.

On this occasion IFCC was celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary having been formed in 1952 as a development from the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC). Our charming and generous hosts for the General Conference were the Malaysian Association of Clinical Biochemists (MACB). The venue was the Crowne Plaza hotel in the city centre – just a short walk from the famous Petronas Towers.

The General Conference began with a splendid welcome dinner hosted by MACB. This was accompanied by some wonderful music and dancing representing the varied cultures in Malaysia.

It was down to business the following day with a series of short update reports on IFCC activities. These included reports from each of the five IFCC Regional Federations. We learned that IFCC is in great shape with the highest ever number of members and an ever-increasing range of activities. We could do more but the Treasurer warned us that we are constrained by our tight financial position.

A session on 'IFCC Looking Outwards' included presentations on International Clinical Liaison; Lab Tests on Line; Using Young Scientists; Influencing Clinical Outcomes; and the IFCC Visiting Lecturer Programme. This was followed by a fascinating vision into the future of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine from a laboratory professional and from an industry perspective.

Day 1 concluded with presentations that were volunteered by IFCC Members. These comprised the Ibero-American Radio of Clinical Biochemistry (Argentina); National Pathology Year (UK); the Clinical Chemistry Training Council (USA); Improving Quality Services (Nepal); Promoting Laboratory Accreditation (Sri Lanka); and Harmonisation Activities (Australia). These short presentations were all great examples of good practice and enabled us to finish on a high.

Day 2 began with the announcement of the result of a trial election using a new preferential voting system and the Alternate Vote system of counting. This methodology will be introduced for future electronic voting by IFCC Members. The outcome was that Alexander Fleming was adjudged to have made the greatest 'accidental scientific finding' when he discovered penicillin.

The rest of the morning and the first half of the afternoon were spent with delegates able to attend six workshops from a total of 17 on offer. A report on these workshops will appear in the next issue of IFCC News. The business part of the conference finished with a stimulating discussion on point of care testing and reflections on 60 years of IFCC from the five Past Presidents who were in attendance.

The finale to the General Conference was another splendid dinner, hosted by Siemens Healthcare. This saw the coming together of the IFCC President and the Presidents of the five Regional Federations to cut the birthday cake (Photo 2). In a poignant moment IFCC received two birthday presents; one from its 'oldest' Member society (Netherlands) and one from the youngest Member society (Kazakhstan).

It is perhaps for others to judge the success of the General Conference. It was a happy occasion with a full programme. New friends were made and experiences were shared. The 'family of IFCC' seems to be in good heart.



Photograph 1: IFCC General Conference Participant



Photograph 2: 'All the Presidents'. From left to right:

1. Layachi Chabraoui – Arab Federation of Clinical Biology (AFCB)
2. Ian Watson – European Federation of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine (EFLM)
3. Graham Beastall – IFCC
4. Vanessa Steenkamp – African Federation of Clinical Chemistry (AFCC)
5. Leslie Lai – Asian Pacific Federation of Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine (APFCB)
6. Carlos Navarro – Latin American Confederation of Clinical Biochemistry (COLABIOCLI)

## **NEWS FROM REGIONAL FEDERATIONS AND NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

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### **NEWS FROM SPAIN**

*Contributed by Felip Antoja Ribó, Liaison to the IFCC eNewsletter and Josefina Mora*

#### **BARCELONA HOST OF THE VI NATIONAL CONGRESS OF CLINICAL LABORATORY**

Barcelona proudly hosted the VI National Congress of Clinical Laboratory, from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to October 25<sup>th</sup> 2012. The Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology (SEQC) together with the Spanish Association of Medical Biopathology (AEBM) and the Spanish Association of Pharmaceutical Analysts (AEFA) organized the Congress that was held in the new International Convention Centre of Barcelona (CCIB), one of the largest convention centers in southern Europe.

The Congress had a particularly active participation with 1328 delegates and the pleasing feature of a high number of young attendees. In addition to meetings for residents and tutors, the high-quality scientific programme was distributed in four Pre-Congress Courses, two Plenary Lectures, ten Symposia, nine Workshops, and two Sessions of Oral Communications for the top ten posters.

The President of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Spanish Television, Manuel Campo Vidal, delivered an excellent Opening Lecture on Communication and Leadership of Health Professionals.

Out of the 917 accepted posters three poster awards were given to support the participation of young investigators. The Pre-Congress Courses provided updates on a wide range of topics, from practical perspectives such as clinical toxicology, to theoretical aspects such as the epigenetic contribution to the clinic.

The Symposia and Workshops covered the most recent scientific and technological advances in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine, focusing on the contributions of new biomarkers in critically ill patients, advances in the diagnosis of hematological malignancies, new applications of mass spectrometry and early diagnosis of rare diseases. The Symposium on Clinical Laboratory Strategic Challenges, led by experts in health economics, aroused a great deal of interest in this era of economic uncertainty. Dynamic strategies for healthcare cost containment were proposed, such as restraining demand and developing more efficient organization of activity in order to ensure sustainability of the National Health System.

The contribution of diagnostic companies was crucial to the success of the Congress. The Commercial Exhibition, which covered a total floor space of 883 m<sup>2</sup>, attracted 36 enterprises, including two Gold Sponsors, two Silver Sponsors and four Bronze Sponsors.

In short, three days of intense activity provided participants with a wonderful opportunity to learn and hear from experts, to develop and strengthen relationships with peers, and to take home enjoyable and valuable memories.



Above left to right: The venue and a view of Barcelona.

Below left to right: the local Committee with the Opening Lecturer, the journalist Manuel Campo Vidal; the SEQC stand;

the Andrea Motis jazz band at the Gala Dinner.

## NEWS FROM SERBIA

*Contributed by Snežana Jovičić, Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia  
Member of the IFCC eNews Working Group*

### BELGRADE HOST OF THE BCLF 2012 MEETINGS OF LABORATORY MEDICINE PROFESSIONALS

The Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and the Institute of Medical Biochemistry Clinical Center of Serbia organized, under the auspices of IFCC and EFLM, as well as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Serbia, three important events from the 18<sup>th</sup> till the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September: the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF), the 8<sup>th</sup> EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region and the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of Medical Biochemists of Serbia



**Snežana Jovicic**

In the presence of 500 participants from the Balkan countries, Prof. Nada Majkić-Singh (Meeting President), Prof. Ian Watson (EFLM President), Prof. Etleva Refetlari (on behalf of prof. Anyla Bulokasneki, BCLF President) and Prof. Vladimir Djukić (on behalf of Ministry of Health of Republic of Serbia) opened the 20<sup>th</sup> BCLF Meeting. On that occasion, the Society of Medical Biochemistry of Serbia honored Prof. Stojan Danev, from Bulgaria, founder of BCLF, with the highest Society award in recognition for his determining role in the foundation of BCLF and for his untiring work for the Society.

The opening ceremony of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of Medical Biochemists of Serbia was marked with the introduction of the newly established Fund “Magistra Milica Marković”. This fund intends to honor the life and work of Milica Marković, dedicated to the improvement of laboratory practice by the foundation of the Institute of Medical Biochemistry of the Clinical Center of Serbia in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Thanks to her engagement, the Institute established a modern organization of laboratory technology, which was later certified according to the ISO quality management system. The first two “Magistra Milica Marković” awards were conferred to Milka Golubović and Gordana Kartaljević for their contribution to the improvement of technological and organizational work principles in clinical laboratories in the Republic of Serbia.

Two outstanding sessions marked the opening of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of Medical Biochemists of Serbia. The first was dedicated to the biological and clinical significance of nitric oxide and L-arginine metabolism intermediates. The second addressed the importance of immuno-serological bio-markers in the differential diagnosis of idiopathic systemic vasculitis, the clinical and laboratory characteristics of cryoglobulinemia, and the clinical and laboratory diagnosis of hereditary angioedema.

This year’s annual EFLM symposium for the Balkan region that closed the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and opened the 20<sup>th</sup> BCLF Meeting, dealt with vitamin D deficiency as a new challenge for laboratory medicine. Prof. Michael Holick, the keynote speaker, and a world-known pioneer in vitamin D metabolism, presented, in an unforgettable way “vitamin D as a D-lightful solution for good health”. After a brief introduction on the biochemistry and metabolism of vitamin D delivered by Dr. S. Jovičić, Serbia, the experts in this field presented the challenges in the diagnosis and monitoring of hypovitaminosis D (M. Vogesser, Germany), the roles of vitamin D in osteoporosis (V. Popović, Serbia), in the prevention of renal and cardiovascular diseases (D. Pavlović, Croatia), in multisystemic

sarcoidosis (V. Mihailović-Vučinić, Serbia). Prof. R. Oparisiu-Fournier (France) covered the biological effects in the elderly population and Prof. M. Nikolić, (Serbia) the contribution of diet to the vitamin D status. Profs. H.J. Roth, from Germany; M. Serteser from Turkey; and N. Babić from USA addressed the challenges in vitamin D measurement from standardization to limitations and performance of the different analytical methods.

This year's BCLF Meeting covered topics ranging from pre-analytics as the way for improving patient safety, through the role of biomarkers in myocardial infarction, malignancies, bone mineralization diseases, genetic disorders, prenatal screening, and autoimmune diseases, and standardization in laboratory medicine.

Prof. Ian D. Watson, EFLM president; Prof. Victor Blaton, EFLM founder and past president and Prof. Elizabeta Topić, of the EFLM Committee for Education and Training, addressed the audience with burning topics on education and training that cover patient safety and laboratory medicine, harmonization of European education in laboratory medicine, recognition of professional qualifications and continuous professional development crediting system in EFLM societies.

Finally, the plenary lecture on clinical pharmacogenomics and the concept of personalized medicine given by Prof. Nikolina Babić from the Pritzker School of Medicine, University of Chicago, drew great attention, as genetic testing is becoming increasingly patient-driven through direct-to-consumer testing.

This was the third time that the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia successfully organized BCLF Meeting, and the second time that it was held in Belgrade. According to reactions and feedback from both participants and invited speakers, their expectations were fulfilled and even surpassed.



**Prof. Ian Watson, EFLM President, during welcome address to participants of 20th BCLF Belgrade Meetings**



Prof. Michael F. Holick presenting Opening lecture during the 20th BCLF Belgrade Meetings



Lecturers on 8th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region (from left to right):  
S. Ignjatović, E. Topić, N. Majkić-Singh, M. Vogeser, M. Fournier

## NEWS FROM POLAND

*Contributed by Pawel Pludowski, Warsaw and  
Professor Grazyna Sypniewska PhD, IFCC National Representative, Poland*

### THE WARSAW CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON VITAMIN D DEFINES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR VITAMIN D SUPPLEMENTATION.

Grazyna Sypniewska



The conference "Vitamin D — Minimum, maximum, optimum" held in Warsaw, Poland last October aimed the development of the First Central European recommendations for vitamin D supplementation. Dr. Pawel Pludowski PhD, Head of Department of Biochemistry and Experimental Medicine of the Children's Memorial Health Institute, Warsaw, Poland and his Team organized the conference under the auspices of IFCC and several Polish Scientific Societies. There were 564 attendees from Poland and other countries. The International Scientific Committee included representatives of Belarus (Ema Rudenka and Ludmila Yankovskaya), Canada (Glenville Jones), Germany (Berthold Koletzko, Karl P. Schlingmann), Hungary (Tamas Decsi), Israel (Yehuda Shoenfeld), Poland (27 members), Switzerland (Heike Bischoff-Ferrari), Russia (Svetlana Yureneva), Ukraine (Vladyslaw Povoroznyuk), United Kingdom (Graham Carter and Elina Hypponen), The United Arab Emirates (Afrozul Haq), and United States (Michael Holick and William Grant).

Both skeletal and extra-skeletal effects of vitamin D were discussed in a spectrum of diseases including multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes mellitus, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, musculoskeletal defects, rickets. The accuracy of 25-hydroxyvitamin D [25(OH)D] assays was discussed by Dr Graham Carter of DEQAS (Vitamin D External Quality Assessment Scheme). Professor Glenville Jones gave a lecture focused on vitamin D safety/toxicity and Professor Michael Holick answered the question whether vitamin D deficiency is an endocrine or nutritional problem. The extremely high prevalence of vitamin D deficiency among Central and Eastern European populations was highlighted during vitamin D tour guided by country representatives. The conference speakers had agreed to publish mini-reviews in the Polish Journal- Standardy Medyczne/Pediatrics (Standards of Medicine/Pediatrics) 2012;9(5).

International Scientific Committee members voted on many issues prior to the meeting, with the results presented during a Round Table Session at the end of the Conference. The attendees approved the primary recommendation to the effect that serum 25(OH)D concentration should be between 30-60 ng/ml (75 – 150 nmol/L).

Given the care in assembling a scientific committee with world-leading vitamin D experts, the recording of the presentations, the publication of speakers' reviews, and the very large attendance, the recommendations from this conference should receive widespread acceptance. It is reasonable to implement the Central European Consensus and its recommendations into everyday practice.

## **NEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES**

### **AACC ELECTS NEW OFFICERS: STEVEN WONG TO SERVE AS AACC PRESIDENT IN 2014**

AACC members elected Steven Wong, PhD, DABCC, FACB, to serve as President of the association in 2014, announced AACC Secretary Elizabeth Frank, PhD. Also newly elected are Dennis Dietzen, PhD, DABCC, FACB, and Corinne Fantz, PhD, DABCC, FACB, to serve as members of the Board of Directors, as well as Michael Bennett, PhD, DABCC, FACB, as Treasurer. Four individuals were elected to serve on the 2013 Nominating Committee: Shannon Haymond, PhD, DABCC; Loralie Langman, PhD, DABCC, FACB; Stacy Melanson, MD, PhD; and M. Laura Parnas, PhD, DABCC, FACB.



**Steven Wong**

With permission from Clinical Laboratory News, November 2012, volume38, number 11

## LAB TESTS ONLINE: A GLOBAL FORCE FOR HEALTH LITERACY

*Contributed By Ann Gronowski, IFCC eNewsletter Liaison to AACC*

Ann Gronowski



Lab Tests Online continues to expand its outreach to educate patients about lab tests worldwide.

Two decades of research indicate that today's health information is presented in a way that isn't usable by most Americans. Nearly 9 out of 10 adults have difficulty using the everyday health information that is routinely available in U.S. health care facilities, retail outlets, media, and communities. Similarly, data shows that 1 in 10 European patients take the wrong dose of medication because they misunderstand the information given to them during consultations with doctors and other health professionals. Clearly, there is a need for improved health literacy worldwide.

Launched in 2001, Lab Tests Online advances understanding of the clinical lab tests that often provide the link between the patient's presentation of symptoms and the doctor's diagnosis of and prescribed treatment for a particular condition or disease. Lab Tests Online empowers patients by providing information on the many

clinical lab tests that are part of routine care as well as diagnosis and treatment of a broad range of conditions and diseases. It was initially developed by AACC in the United States and has since grown to become a global initiative with presence in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America. Almost one-third of the world's population can now learn about their lab tests in their native language thanks to Lab Tests Online and the many organizations that support it.

Our global activity continues to grow. In October, Lab Tests Online Executive Editor D. Robert Dufour, MD, gave a presentation on Lab Tests Online and the value of health literacy in affecting health outcomes at the Second Congress of the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFCC) and the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) in Dubrovnik.

November saw the launch of Lab Tests Online–Romania, in partnership with SRLM, the local professional society, and AFPM, the local industry association affiliated with EDMA, AACC's Lab Tests Online partner in the EU. Romania is the 17<sup>th</sup> country to launch a Lab Tests Online website. The launch generated a great deal of interest, with participants at standing room only for the presentation. Unfortunately, we were unable to attend the launch in Romania due to Hurricane Sandy, but Shweta Kulkarni of EDMA ably took our place.

In November, we also launched a mobile app for Lab Tests Online-AU. Australia was the first of AACC's partners outside the U.S. to reach out to mobile users. Lab Tests Online-AU was a natural fit as 25% of those accessing the Lab Tests Online-AU website are mobile users. The launch was an international affair, with involvement from Graham Beastall of the IFCC (via letter), Lab Tests Online Executive Producer George Linzer (via video) and AACC President Greg Miller to cut the virtual ribbon.

November was a busy month for Lab Tests Online. George Linzer and Shweta Kulkarni presented on Lab Tests Online and health literacy to the Editorial Board of the EU Health Portal on November 27. With this presentation, we hope to establish tighter integration between the recently redesigned EU Health Portal and Lab Tests Online sites in Europe.

We at AACC and Lab Tests Online partners are extremely excited about the progress we've made in raising health literacy. As a global standard for patient education, we believe that we can ensure that all patients gain the health literacy skills that will help them live healthier throughout their lifespan.

#### **NEWS FROM CANADA**

***Contributed by Allison Venner and Curtis Oleschuk, Liaison to the IFCC eNewsletter***

#### **CSCC BY-LAW REVISIONS REQUIRED BY NEW LEGISLATION.**

The Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists (CSCC) is revising its By-Laws to comply with the new Canadian Not-for-profit Corporations Act (NFP Act). This Act replaces a portion of the Canada Corporations Act, previously in effect since 1917, and establishes a modernized set of rules for federally incorporated not-for-profit corporations, including CSCC. The NFP Act claims to be more flexible to meet the needs of not-for-profit groups. The rules of the NFP Act will apply to CSCC only after it transitions to the new Act. As part of the transition process, the CSCC will obtain a Certificate of Continuance to replace its Letters Patent under the old Act, and will revise its current By-Laws. The CSCC has organized a small transition team to assist with the required document preparation. A lawyer is also being consulted to ensure the new By-Laws comply with the Act.

It is anticipated that the final version of By-Law changes will be ready for approval by CSCC membership within 3 months of the annual general meeting at the joint AACC-CSCC conference in 2013 in Houston, Texas. This will allow completion of the transition process well in advance of the October 2014 deadline set by the Canadian Government.

***Contributed by Dr. Ed Randell, CSCC President***

#### **INTERNATIONAL VISITOR EXCHANGE GRANT (SPONSORED BY ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS)**

***Contributed by Dr. Jianxin Lu, China***



**From left to right: Dr. Ed Randell, CSCC President, Dr. Jianxin Lu, Michel Blain, Roche representative.**

I was able to visit Canada this past summer to learn more about the advances in laboratory medicine. During my time with Dr. Qing Meng from the Clinical Chemistry Laboratories, Saskatchewan, I gained valuable insight into their laboratory automation system and laboratory information system. I also had a great opportunity to attend the 2012 CSCC annual meeting in Quebec City. I had a poster presentation, attended many educational sessions, and saw the latest laboratory instruments. I was very impressed with the beauty of Quebec City. Most importantly, I experienced the friendship and hospitality of many Canadian laboratory professionals.

I hope the knowledge and experience I learned during my visit to Canada will help us to improve laboratory performance and quality in laboratory medicine in China. This opportunity was only possible through the generous support of the CSCC and Roche Diagnostics Canada – Thank you for making all of this possible!

### **ALLERGY TESTING STANDARDIZATION INITIATIVE**

***Contributed by Dr. Kareena Schnabl, Alberta Health Services***

This year an area of focus for the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemistry has been improving test utilization to control costs and to optimize patient care. A multidisciplinary allergy testing working group was formed to review current food allergy diagnosis guidelines and to examine existing laboratory processes. Major challenges identified were broad screening of food allergens with poor performance or non-validated tests, no markers for allergy severity, and an educational gap in interpretation of allergy test results. Following consultation with allergy specialists and clinical chemists, innovative solutions were gathered.

Key recommendations included a standardized laboratory information system, requisition and reference interval, centralization of testing, criteria for approved send outs, updated test menus, discontinuation of poor performance tests, and development of interpretive reporting comments. The utility of component resolved diagnostics for predicting peanut allergy severity in children was investigated. The results were not as promising as hoped and differed from international studies. An allergy testing plan has been drafted and is awaiting feedback from general practitioners and laboratory leaders. The objectives for the New Year are to develop educational materials and to deliver educational sessions on allergy testing. The goal is to spark a collaborative international allergy testing group motivated to communicate best clinical practice.

### **NEWS FROM ITALY**

***Contributed by Edgard Delvin, IFCC eNewsletter Editor***  
**THE ANNUAL ANGELO BURLINA SYMPOSIUM – PADOVA, ITALY**

#### **THE UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA HOSTS THE 19TH ANNUAL ANGELO BURLINA SYMPOSIUM**

The theme of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual symposium dedicated to the memory of Professor Angelo Burlina focused on diagnostics errors and quality indicators in laboratory medicine. The event, chaired by Professor Mario Plebani, Chair of the IFCC Laboratory Errors and Patient Safety Working Group, was held in the University of Padova, founded in 1222, making it thus the one of the first established University in Europe. The magnificent lecture hall Aula Magna del Bo that hosted the participants has witnessed masterly lectures delivered by physicians such as Andreas Vesalius, Johannes Georg Wirsung and William Harvey.

The content of the symposium followed the long-term tradition of excellence of University of Padova. In his keynote lecture, Professor Mark Graber from New York set the stage for the day by giving an inclusive overview of diagnostic errors and their effects on patient care. Five speakers that provided their personal view of this complex subject not only for clinical chemists but also for other medical laboratory specialists followed him.

Whereas the morning speakers addressed laboratory errors, those of the afternoon covered quality indicators that could help reducing these errors. Professor Julian Barth presented the Institute of Medicine definition of Quality Improvement and emphasized that this process is inductive to converting data into knowledge that could improve patient safety and care. Professor Laura Sciacovelli described the IFCC project on Quality Indicators highlighting the progress made and urged the audience to participate in the building of the international database. Professor Plebani, Chair and organizer of this symposium, concluded the symposium by giving an overview of the benchmarking tools that he and his team have developed. He stressed that, besides improving patient care, the primary role of this benchmarking initiative, it will also make laboratory more visible to the different stakeholders and the public. The symposium was a thorough success in all respects. Bravo Professor Plebani!



**Mario Plebani**

#### **NEWS FROM ROMANIA**



#### **Lab Tests Online Launched in Romania**

BUCHAREST – November 1st 2012. The European Diagnostic Manufacturers Association (EDMA) and the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) welcome [Lab Tests Online-RO](#), the Romanian version of the award-winning website, to the global network of Lab Tests Online sites. Lab Tests Online empowers patients by providing information on the many clinical lab tests that are part of routine care as well as diagnosis and treatment of a broad range of conditions and diseases.

The new website is locally coordinated by AFPM, a national association of medical products suppliers, and the Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine (RSLM). The involvement of both organisations follows a model successfully applied in nine other EU countries, and ensures that the medical test information provided comes from the professionals who do the testing.

Lab Tests Online was initially developed by AACC in the United States and has since grown to become a global initiative with presence in Europe, Brazil, China and Australia. EDMA coordinates the project for its continental Europe participants – including the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, all of whom co-operate and support the mission of

providing a peer-reviewed, patient-centered and non-commercial service to individuals, medical professionals and relevant stakeholders.

The clear and easy to understand information that is provided to citizens and physicians alike on Lab Tests Online is an important tool for the education of the public and the optimisation of healthcare to suit patient's needs. "Lab Tests Online-Romania is another step toward improved patient literacy throughout Europe and the world," commented Serge Bernasconi, EDMA CEO, on the launch.

Thanks to Lab Tests Online's commitment to providing quality information on diagnostic tests, it has been recognised by the Health on the Net Certification (HONcode) and linked to the European Commission's Health-EU Portal.

"The launch of Lab Tests Online-RO is further evidence that Lab Tests Online is a global leader in patient education," said D. Robert Dufour, MD, executive editor for the global network of sites. "Just as lab testing plays a significant role in medical decision-making, so too does Lab Tests Online have an important role in improving health outcomes."

## NEWS FROM ETHIOPIA

***Contributed by Mr Gizachew Tadesse Akalu, Ethiopian Medical Laboratory Association (EMLA) Vice-President***



Report on the EMLA Annual Activities. I have the pleasure of submitting this report summary being in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of my mandate as Vice-President of the Ethiopian Medical Laboratory Association (EMLA). EMLA is one of the oldest professional associations in Ethiopia, officially registered with the Ministry of Justice in 1964. Over the years, the association has undergone various name and structural changes and was re-registered by the Ethiopian Government Law of Charities and Society Proclamation No. 621.2009, with the obligation of insuring and promoting quality laboratory services in Ethiopia.

This year has been challenging and we have accomplished progress on many fronts. We have increased the membership that now stands as 10 Life Members, 100 new regular Members and 50 Student Members.

Among the important achievements, the Executive Committee has 1) launched the project GH12-1217 in collaboration of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Ethiopian Medical Association (EMA) that strengthens the Human Resources for Health through an increased capacity of the EMA; 2) collaborated with the USAID / Private Sector program and regional Health Bureaus in the launching of training on 12 quality system essentials and laboratory management for government, private laboratories and catholic base health centers; 3) provided Clinical and Laboratory seminars on Tuberculosis control program in collaboration with the USAID / Private Health Sector Program and respective Regional Health Bureaus; 4) given technical assistance to EHNRI on national quality manual development and referral linkage of laboratories and on other Laboratory related issues; 5) provided medical laboratory ethics course for private college students and given out 1500 copies of code of ethics for laboratory professional working in private and public institution.

During 2012 the Executive Committee has agreed to commence projects on the design and evaluation on EQA, Point of Care Testing, Education and Training and the Impact of Laboratory Medicine on Clinical Management and Outcomes. These new initiatives will start in 2013.

These initiatives will accelerate the Step-wise Laboratory Improvement Process towards Accreditation (SLIPTA).

EMLA is a member of different National Institutes and Working Groups such as the Federal Ministry of Health, and Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute, the Food, Medicine, Health Care Administration and Control Agency; the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency; Ethiopian National Accreditation Office; USAID / PHSP.

I wish to thank the Executive Committee and volunteer technical working groups of EMLA for their will, commitment and inspiration. Finally I would like to acknowledge the IFCC for its infallible support and who has provided us assistance through the IFCC-Roche Travel scholarship to participate to the IFCC general conference in Kuala Lumpur. Our attendance at the General Conference will impact upon the focus and activities of our National Society.



EMLA celebrated Ethiopia's First National Laboratory Week. As part of its continuous effort to promote quality medical laboratory services in the country, the EMLA in collaboration with the Private Health Sector Program (PHSP) organized Ethiopia's first National Laboratory Week, thereby joining an annual global event. The primary objective of the Laboratory Week is to recognize the significant contribution that medical laboratories and laboratory professionals make in delivering health care and saving lives. A second objective is to raise public awareness of the profession.

The event began with a mass walk on Sunday, April 22, 2012, to draw public attention to the theme, "Role of Public Private Medical Laboratory for Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention of Disease," along with other important issues pertaining to the profession. The walk attracted nearly 300 laboratory professionals. Friends of the laboratory workers and a number of Addis residents joined the walk. The Maleda Art and Music Club members also took part, with entertainment and short messages about the role of laboratories and laboratory professionals in health care.

Presentations and panel discussions followed the walk. The guest of honor from the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) promised unreserved ministry support to the association. The national laboratory master plan achievements and gaps, the role of public-private medical laboratories in health care, current medical laboratory regulatory standards and their implementation, and accreditation for quality laboratory results were the center of the discussions. The participants and the panelists ended the session agreeing on the importance of quality, public-private partnerships, accreditation, and regulatory procedures as key areas in which every stakeholder and laboratory professional have to be involved.

## NEWS FROM AUSTRALASIA

*Contributed by Sandra Klingberg, IFCC eNewsletter Liaison*

There were two occasions to be marked at this year's meeting of the Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists (AACB), November 15 – 18.

The first celebration was to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> annual scientific meeting of the AACB and the second was to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday of Lab Tests Online Australasia. Lab Tests Online Australasia is an award-winning not-for-profit website established by the AACB to provide free public information about pathology. It is supported by the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) and funded by a grant from the Australian Government, Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA), Quality Use of Pathology Program.

At the closing ceremony, Lab Tests Online Australasia celebrated by launching a free app for smart phones and tablets.

Developed under licence from the American Association for Clinical Chemistry, the Lab Tests Online Australasia website is proving highly popular with about 80,000 visits each month - one new visitor every minute. Just under half of visitors are patients and carers, about 32 per cent are medical and health professionals seeking quick confirmation of tests and about 15 per cent are students.

While the online website is already outstandingly successful, analysis of internet traffic revealed that 25 per cent of all users were accessing the website from a mobile device such as a smart phone or tablet. Making content available via a dedicated mobile app will improve the quality of the user experience when accessing Lab Tests Online Australasia, and will also hopefully further increase the number of people using this resource.

The new app, which is being advertised with the slogan: "Putting pathology into your palm" is already being quickly taken up with most early downloads being via the Apple iTunes store (for iPhone, iPad and iPod devices). A version for Google Android is also available as a "beta version" for testing, and a further version for the Amazon Kindle will soon also be available.



The AACC President launched the Lab Tests Online AU mobile app on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November by cutting a piece of network cable. Participants Left to Right: Dr Graham Jones (RCPA), Ms Suzanne Petrie (DOHA), Dr Bruce Campbell (Chief Editor), Dr Greg Miller (AACC President), Dr Andrew St John (AACB President), Prof Leslie Burnett (Lab Tests Online AU Board Chair).

## NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

*Contributed by Rajiv Erasmus, IFCC eNewsletter WG Member*

Prof. Rajiv Erasmus



### ACID BASE SYMPOSIUM HELD IN JOHANNESBURG UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY

A one-day Acid-Base Symposium was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 under the auspices of the SAACB at the University of the Witwatersrand Medical School's exciting Adler Museum (Johannesburg, South Africa).

The symposium, organized by Dr Jocelyn Naicker, SAACB Scientific Officer, was aimed to assist Registrars in their preparation for the August Colleges of Medicine, South Africa (CMSA) examination as well as to highlight the clinical relevance of Co-Oximetry.

Attendees were updated on Stewart's physicochemical theory by Prof Guy Richards (Head of the Critical Care Unit at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital) and all the other topics were covered by National Health laboratory Services (NHLS) Chemical Pathologists employed at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital (Dr Verena Gounden), Tygerberg Hospital (Dr Megan Rensburg), Groote Schuur Hospital (Dr Fierdoz Omar), Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital (Dr Peter Tsaagane) and Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital (Dr Jocelyn Naicker).

The 26 attendees (including the 6 speakers) (Chemical Pathology and Internal Medicine Registrars as well as 1 nephrologist) found the interaction between the clinical and laboratory departments to be very informative and suggested a repeat of similar symposiums.



**Attendees and speakers at the Acid Base Symposium held on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012 at the Adler Museum, University of the Witwatersrand Medical School, Johannesburg, South Africa.**

### PROFESSOR TAHIR PILLAY TO BE NEXT CHAIR OF IFCC WG NEWSLETTER

Professor Pillay was proposed by the SAACB to be the Editor of the IFCC eNewsletter and chair of eNewsletter WG, and his nomination accepted by the IFCC. As of January 2013, he will thus become a member of the executive committee of the Communications and Publications Division (CPD-EC) and

will be relinquishing his position as a member of C-PR. The SAACB would like to congratulate him on his appointment.

### **MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL BIOCHEMISTRY CONFERENCE KUALA LUMPUR, 20-21ST OF NOVEMBER, 2012**

The SAACB members gave three presentations during the Malaysian Association of Clinical Biochemistry Conference that took place immediately after the IFCC General Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Professor Erasmus spoke on Point of Care Testing – an African perspective, Professor Pillay on the current understanding of the pathogenesis and management of Obesity whilst Prof Matsha gave a talk on a closer look at HbA1C

The SAACB signs an agreement with IFCC to hold 2017 IFCC Congress in Durban

Professor Erasmus, President of the SAACB, in presence of Professor Steenkamp, AFCC President, and Professor Pillay, SAACB secretary, recently signed a contract with MZ Congressi (for IFCC), by which the SAACB will be hosting the 2017 IFCC Congress in Durban.

### **THE ANNUAL SAACB CONGRESS, PATHPOINT, HELD IN CENTURY CITY FROM 28-30TH OF SEPTEMBER 2012**

The annual meeting of the SAACB was held in association with the Federation of Societies of Pathology of South Africa (FSASP) of which the SAACB is a member. The Association of Pathologists of East, Central and Southern Africa also participated lending an international flavor to the meeting. Out of the 70 speakers more than 40 were international. This year's keynote speakers were the Deputy Minister for Health and Dr Fleming from the Royal College of Pathologists.

The members of the IFCC Committee on Laboratory Management (Dr Krahn, Dr Frank, Professor Goldsmith and Professor Erasmus) gave 4 talks on laboratory management that were well attended. Dr Jim Bonham from the UK was the SAACB invited plenary speaker. The Journal Annals of Clinical Biochemistry sponsored Dr Edmund Lamb (editor-in-chief, Annals of Clinical Biochemistry) to the meeting whilst APCB (Asia Pacific Federation of Clinical Biochemistry sponsored Dr Frank. The other IFCC Committee members included Professors Ichihara (Reference Interval Decision Limits) from Japan, Rosy Tirimacco from Australia (Working Group on Point of Care Testing) and Janice Gill from Australia (Analytics). Stellenbosch University gave a generous travel grant to partially sponsor 12 delegates from Africa

### **SAACB WINS BID TO HOST THE 3RD AFRICA FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY (AFCC) CONFERENCE**

The SAACB will host the next AFCC meeting in Cape Town at the International Convention Centre from 28-31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013. The congress will be preceded by a laboratory management workshop as well as a hands-on training course in molecular biology.

## NEWS FROM BELGIUM

*Contributed by Bernard Gouget, SFBC-EFLM representative and IFCC-Treasurer*



**Bernard Gouget**

### **THE ROYAL BELGIAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY (RBSCC) ELECTED ITS EXECUTIVE.**

The incoming President is Professor Michel Langlois from Ghent University. The Vice-President is Professor Pierre Wallemacq, from Université de Louvain (Brussels); the Secretary Professor Joris Penders from ZOL, Gent; the Treasurer Hugo Neels from ZNA Antwerp and the IFCC representative Professor Jean-Paul Chapelle from Liège University.

### **IFCC WELCOMES A NEW AFFILIATE MEMBER: CONAQUIC**

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Quím. Jesús  
Norberto  
Lozano

Quím.  
Patricia  
Romero

Quím.  
Nidia  
Cárdenas

Quím. Ma.  
Guadalupe  
Maldonado

Quím.  
Rosa Ma.  
González

**Executive CONAQUIC**

The IFCC Executive Board is proud to announce that the Federación Nacional de Químicos Clínicos CONAQUIC, A.C. has joined the ranks of the Federation. A summary of its history follows.

The beginnings of the National Federation of Clinical Chemists CONAQUIC date back to 1976 when it was founded by the National Association of Clinical Chemists, constituted by clinical chemists of México City. There were also other Clinical Chemist Associations throughout the country that independently exercised local jurisdiction.

Faced with an increasing membership, the National Association of Clinical Chemists was first renamed "Mexican Federation of Clinical Chemists" in 1978 and then, due to further growth, to "National Confederation of Clinical Chemistry (CONAQUIC) in 1983 being composed of six regional federations. In 1998, by agreement of all affiliated professional colleges, the Association acquired a new name: "National Association of Clinical Chemists", retaining its original abbreviation of CONAQUIC.

The word "National" being exclusive to government institutions, the Association had to be renamed "Mexican College of Clinical Chemists" and was officially registered, in 2000, with the General Directorate of Professions under number F-302. It however kept its acronym CONAQUIC by Assembly agreement.

In 2008, in order to be accredited as a certifying body by the General Directorate of Professions in the scope of the national surveillance professionals in chemistry, the name had again to be modified to "Federation of Clinical Chemists CONAQUIC, with a new registration number to F-370. It is now composed of 43 professional colleges covering the entire country.

Currently, CONAQUIC organizes two congresses a year: The National Congress of Clinical Chemistry and EXPOQUIM, and the National Congress for Analysis of Quality Guarantee, during which are discussed the main problems of the different regions of the Federation, thereby allowing solution proposals.

The Election of Presidents is held every other year based on statutes and regulations. It takes place during the National Assembly of Presidents and Delegates in the National Congress of Clinical Chemistry. To date 17 Presidents have been elected.

For further information please visit the website: <http://www.conaquic.org.mx/>

## **NEWS FROM CLINICAL LABORATORY STANDARDS INSTITUTE (CLSI)**

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*Contributed by Megan Scanlon, Marketing Communication Specialist*

### **NEW CLSI GUIDELINE RELEASES**

**Principles and Procedures for Detection of Fungi in Clinical Specimens** - The Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) has published M54-A-Principles and Procedures for Detection of Fungi in Clinical Specimens - Direct Examination and Culture; Approved Guideline. The new document addresses the protocols for detecting fungi in clinical specimens and highlights direct microscopic examinations and fungal culturing methods.

Direct examinations equip laboratory scientists with a substantial amount of information, in a rapid fashion, on possible pathogens. In addition to this prime focus, M54's guidance on fungal media includes application, selections, inoculation, incubation, and schedules for reading. This document is intended for laboratory scientists who process specimens for fungal culture and/or perform fungal direct microscopic examinations.

CLSI will host a webinar on January 30, 2013 from 1:00-2:00 PM Eastern (US) Time on CLSI document M54. The webinar will be presented by Dr. Wengenack and will provide greater detail about how to use and implement the document. More information can be found by visiting CLSI's website and selecting "CLSI Webinars" under the "Education" tab.

**Second Edition of the approved guideline GP09-A2 - Quality Management System: Qualifying, Selecting, and Evaluating a Referral Laboratory** - This guideline offers a list of criteria and requirements to consider when evaluating candidates for selection as a referral laboratory. This document is also helpful for referral laboratories as they seek to anticipate and meet the needs of their customers. This version is now aligned with new or changed international, national, or accreditation requirements. Also, the new version is more closely aligned with the CLSI Quality Management System (QMS) Model—specifically, Quality System Essential Purchasing and Inventory.

**Approved Guidelines EP27-A - How to Construct and Interpret an Error Grid for Quantitative Diagnostic Assays.**

This guideline explains the usefulness of error grids to inform users about the clinical consequences of varying results between a candidate and a comparative measurement procedure. It is intended for use by developers of measurement procedures—including laboratory-developed tests—and by clinical laboratories. This document will help users to better understand the usefulness of the error grid approach. It will also assist in the construction of an error grid for a diagnostic assay, performance of an experiment and analysis of the data using the error grid, and understanding of the concepts with illustrated examples.

**Approved Guideline MM20-A - Quality Management for Molecular Genetic Testing.**

This guideline fulfills an international need for a globally applicable consensus guideline that specifically addresses quality management systems in molecular genetic testing. This guideline extends international Quality Management Systems standards and guidelines (including ISO 15189 and CLSI document GP26) into molecular genetic testing services.

It also incorporates internationally recognized best practices for molecular genetic testing. MM20 discusses the application of quality system essentials to quality management and technical processes of molecular genetic testing. The document provides many tools, job aids, and resources to help facilitate the development and maintenance of quality systems for molecular genetic testing.

For additional information, visit the CLSI website at [www.clsi.org](http://www.clsi.org)

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## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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MEETING	DATE	VENUE	INFORMATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2<sup>nd</sup> EFLM-BD European Conference on Preanalytical Phase</li> </ul>	March 1-2, 2013	Zagreb, Croatia	Scientific Programme and Abstract Submission available at: <a href="http://www.preanalytical-phase.org">www.preanalytical-phase.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metabolic and Infectious Mediterranean Endemia</li> </ul>	May 16-18, 2013	Marseille, France	<a href="http://www.ifcc.org">http://www.ifcc.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EuroMedLab 2013 - 20th IFCC-EFCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine</li> </ul>	May 19-23, 2013	Milano, Italy	<a href="http://www.milan2013.org">www.milan2013.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference of National Strategies for Chlamydia Trachomatis and Human Papillomavirus</li> </ul>	May 23-24, 2013	Berlin, Germany	<a href="http://www.iecclm.com">www.iecclm.com</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and 14<sup>th</sup> Iranian Congress of Biochemistry</li> </ul>	September 8-12, 2013	Tehran, Iran	Contact: <a href="mailto:salami.si@gmail.com">salami.si@gmail.com</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COLABIOCLI 2013 - XXI Congreso Latinoamericano de Bioquímica Clínica</li> </ul>	October 29 - November 1, 2013	Lima, Perú	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>APCCB 2013 - 13<sup>th</sup> Asian Pacific Congress of Clinical Biochemistry</li> </ul>	November 17-20, 2013	Bali, Indonesia	<a href="http://www.apccb2013.org">www.apccb2013.org</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WorldLab 2014 - 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine</li> </ul>	June 22-26, 2014	Istanbul, Turkey.	<a href="http://www.istanbul2014.org">www.istanbul2014.org</a>