Contents

BERLIN 2011 - PARIS 2015

The 21st International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM) and 19th IFCC-EFCC congress of CCLM in Berlin

The 4th EFCC General Assembly, Berlin, May15 2011 at a glance

EFCC and (UEMS, EDMA, Corporate Members, CEPLIS) and more

New elected EFCC Board members 2011-13

The EFCC/Labs Are Vital Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine

News from the National Societies

Bulgarian National Congress Hosts International Experts on the black sea (sept 7-10 2011)

Greece: Training of Laboratory Medicine Specialists in Greece

The Israel Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (ISCLS)

Latvia: Increasing Awareness of the Importance of STIs and their Potential Health Impact

The Netherlands: Impressions of SFBC Symposium in Paris on Laboratory Management in Europe, April 2011

"Laboratory Medicine at Clinical Interface" - the 18th National Congress of Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine

Mandatory Accreditation for Medical Laboratories in Romania

In memoriam: Corneliu Chiriloiu, MD, PhD (1933-2011)

Strategic Framework for Quality Management and Accreditation of the Medical Laboratories in Serbia

Serbian Seminar on Education of Medical Biochemists Today

Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology: A History
The 21st International Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM) and 19th IFCC-EFCC congress of CCLM in Berlin has just ended. The congress was a great success with over 4500 delegates and speakers from more than 100 countries with total attendance over 8500 people. The four-day academic program provided the participants opportunities to communicate, to exchange ideas, and to make friends.

Thank you to Harald, Rudy, Karl, the German organizers, the Emmezeta team and the IFCC/EFCC office. The Berlin meeting was one of the world’s foremost gatherings of leaders from academia, the public and private sectors and the in vitro diagnostic industry stakeholders to jointly develop strategies and act to address key challenges in laboratory medicine practice and research.

The 21st IFCC/EFCC Euromedlab will take place in Paris in 2015 the theme is "Revolution in Laboratory Medicine", linking scientific and other evidence to shape tomorrow’s developments in the field of laboratory medicine and global health. On behalf the French society, we sincerely hope you can participate and contribute to this important IFCC/EFCC congress.

Last but not least, EFCC members would like to thank Prof Rita Horváth, past EFCC President and to congratulate her for the remarkable and creative work she has done as EFCC president. The EFCC members want you to know how much we value your effort, determination and commitment.
The 4th EFCC General Assembly, Berlin, May 15 2011 at a glance

The President, Prof A.R. Horváth welcomed the delegates to the General Assembly (GA) in Berlin. From the 39 member states, 34 national representatives were present and eligible for voting.

An important issue was the name of the profession. Of the 39 European member National Societies, 28 (72%) voted. Eighteen (64%) of the votes were in favor of the name SPECIALIST IN LABORATORY MEDICINE.

Concerning the structure and organization, EFCC and IFCC strengthened and formalized its collaboration by signing the IFCC-EFCC Memorandum of Understanding and Working Agreement. The two parties revised the Euromedlab guidelines and started the organization of the 2013 and 2015 Euromedlab conferences.

EFCC and UEMS (the European Association for Medical Specialists) developed a new joint regional conference policy and organized their first joint conference event in Portugal in 2010. The second joint conference is planned in Dubrovnik in 2012.

EFCC and EDMA signed a Working Agreement in October 2010. The Director General of EDMA is a member of EFCC’s Advisory Board.

EFCC and Corporate Members (Abbott, Beckman, Becton-Dickinson, Bio-Rad, Roche) signed formal collaborations and agreements to support specific projects or educational events.

EFCC and EDMA signed a Working Agreement in October 2010. The Directory General of EDMA is member of EFCC’s Advisory Board.

EFCC and CEPLIS (Conseil Européen des Professions Libérales, European Council of the Liberal Professions; www.ceplis.org a recognized inter-professional association representing the liberal professions at EC level). Simone Zérah was elected as one of the three vice presidents at the Executive Board of CEPLIS. EFCC and CEPLIS signed an agreement and has a seat in CEPLIS offices in Brussels.

EU and EC EFCC took part in the meetings of the EU Commission Exploratory Process on Medical Devices working parties and collaborated with the EC working parties on Research Priorities in the EU. An important landmark in the ongoing strong collaboration with the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) was EFCC’s official admission to Recognized Stakeholder Status in EA on 13 December 2010.

EFCC also strengthened its collaboration by co-organizing scientific or educational events with the European Society of Cardiology, the Federation of European Microbiology Societies, the European Atherosclerosis Society and the European Thrombosis Research Organisation.
News from the EFCC
The 4th EFCC General Assembly, Berlin, May 15 2011 at a glance

The EFCC/Labs Are Vital Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine
was created in 2009 to recognize outstanding published research demonstrating favorable clinical or
economic outcomes from the use of an in vitro diagnostic test. The EFCC-Abbott Labs are Vital Award
2011 honored the University of Sheffield Team in the United Kingdom. The team, led by Steve W.
Goodacre, Ph.D., was recognized for its scientific article published in Heart entitled "The Randomized
Assessment of Treatment Using Panel Assay of Cardiac Markers"

The Treasurer presented EFCC’s financial situation and the budget for 2011. The Treasurer concluded
that the financial foundation for EFCC was small but solid. The EFCC report and budget and the report on
the EC4 accounts were approved by all. The general assembly.

Prof. S. Sandberg reported the work of the Scientific Committee. He found that most countries could
do more for the advancement of the profession at European level but EFCC tried to engage in work
which was not overlapping with IFCC. He also emphasized the need for more cooperation and synergy
or harmonization between the two organizations and other sister federations. R. Jansen (NL): insisted to
bring young people into the Committees (C) and Working Groups (WG) of EFCC. AR. Horvath: EFCC
Executive Board has decided to open up one position in each of its C or WG for young professionals and
everybody is welcome to make nominations.

The Education & Training Committee has two Working Groups, Congresses and Postgraduate
Training and Distance Education and e-learning respectively. Activities in the e-learning WG were
reported by T. Zima. He also reported about the forthcoming European meeting on Education & Training
to take place in Prague, on 19-20 March 2012. In addition I. Watson presented the outline of another
linked meeting, called Cutting Edge Laboratory Management in Europe (CELME), which will be held on
21-22 March 2012 in Prague. W. Huisman presented the work of the Committee which has two WGs –
the Accreditation and ISO/CEN WG and the IVD WG.

S. Zerah presented the work of the Professional Committee that runs the EC4 Register Commission
A. Wootton was appointed as the new chair of the Public and Professional Committee that presented
and launched the renewed EFCC website (www.efcclm.eu) where presentations referred to the general
assembly can be viewed and downloaded.

Ian Watson (formerly President-elect) automatically became President according to the Statutes of
EFCC. The candidates for President-elect, Secretary and Treasurer were unopposed. Therefore the GA
endorsed Mauro Panteghini for President-elect, Ana-Maria Simundic for Secretary (first term) and
Peter Schuff-Werner for Treasurer (third and last term) for the next term starting from July 1st, 2011
until June 30th, 2013. Huib Storm was elected for the first position of member-at-large, and Tomas
Zima was elected for the second position of member-at-large.
News from the EFCC

The 4th EFCC General Assembly, Berlin, May15 2011 at a glance

Deputy position of member of the EC4 Foundation Board (voting by EFCC EU member societies only). The number of EU countries present at the voting procedure was 24 from a total of 26. One unopposed candidate was nominated and elected, Gijsbert Wieringa from the UK.

Presentation of the EC4 Distinguished Officer Award for 2010 and 2011 Janet McMurray and Mike Hallworth received the Distinguished EC4 Officer Award from Ian Watson for 2011 and 2010, respectively.

EuroMedLab 2015 – selection of host city by secret ballot
E Topic and T Ozben presented the nominees, the results of the assessment of the joint IFCCEFCC evaluation committee and the rules of the voting procedure. The following cities: Athens, Dublin, Paris, Prague, Seville and Stockholm sent their bids for the organization of EuroMedLab 2015. Paris received a clear majority of the votes, therefore the EuroMedLab 2015 will be held in Paris.

New elected EFCC Board members 2011-13

Prof. Mauro Panteghini EFCC, president elect
Prof. Mauro Panteghini, MD, is full professor of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology at University of Milan (Italy) Medical School. Prof. Panteghini holds directorships in the chairs of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology at the Medical School of the University of Milan and at the Center for Metrological Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (CIRME) of the University of Milan, and leads the Accredited Reference Laboratory for Enzyme Standardization (a JCTLM listed reference laboratory). Prof. Panteghini has served in numerous international and national scientific capacities in laboratory medicine, and has held many positions within the IFCC and the JCTLM. He is editor-in-chief of Biochimica Clinica, the official journal of the Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology (SIBioC). He has published numerous manuscripts and abstract, and lectures at many national and international congresses, meetings, and symposia.

Dr. Ana-Maria Simundic* EFCC general secretary
Ana-Maria Simundic, PhD, heads the Emergency Laboratory department at the Sestre Milosrdnice University Hospital in Zagreb (Croatia). Dr. Simundic graduated from the faculty of Pharmacy and Biochemistry University of Zagreb, where she defended her masters and PhD theses, and was awarded the title Assistant Professor. Dr. Simundic also received training at the university of Connecticut (USA) Health Center, where worked on molecular genetic techniques and did research on developmental biology. Currently Dr. Simundic is the Editor-in-Chief of Biochimica Medica, the journal of the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemists. She chairs the Committee for Public Relations for the Croatian Society of Biochemistry, and is the EFCC National representative for Croatia. Dr. Simundic also functions as ISO 15189 accreditation assessor for Molecular Diagnostics and General clinical chemistry. Her work experience includes teaching courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
News from the EFCC

Dr. Huibert Storm EFCC EB member
Dr. Huibert Storm is a clinical chemist, head of laboratory at the Stichting KCL Medical Center in Leeuwarden (The Netherlands). Dr. Storm, a graduate biochemist, received his PhD from the University of Leiden (The Netherlands). He is the past president of the Netherlands Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (NVKC). During his tenure as president of NVKC he hosted the successful EUROMEDLAB 2007 in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), which was honored by a visit from HM Queen Beatrix. Dr. Storm founded the NVKC working group for molecular biology, and was member of a committee on DNA-diagnostics of the Health Council of The Netherlands advising the minister of health. At present, Dr. Storm is the national representative of NVKC for IFCC and EFCC. His major professional, scientific, and clinical interests lie in the field of molecular biology, hematoooncology, and flow cytometry.

Prof. Tomás Zima
Prof. Tomás Zima, MD, DSc, PhD, MBA, is the Dean of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University Prague (Czech Republic), consultant to the Czech Republic Ministry of Education, and professor of Medical Chemistry and Biochemistry. Prof. Zima graduated with honors from Charles University, where he obtained his MD, a PhD in biochemistry, and the higher doctorate, DSc. He has also earned an MBA from Prague International Business School at the University of Economics (PIBS). His research is focused on oxidative stress, new diagnostic techniques, screening for Down’s syndrome, tumor markers, and the metabolism of alcohol. He is a PhD lecturer in Biochemistry and Pathobiochemistry. Prof. Zima is the author of four monographs and many articles. He is the winner of numerous awards, among them Award of the Rector of Charles University. Prof. Zima is a member of the Czech Medical Academy, president of the Czech Society of Clinical Biochemistry, Chairperson of the Executive Committee of FEBS (Federation of the Societies of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), and several other national and international professional organizations. He is the Editor-in-Chief of Folia Biologica and Addictology.

EFCC-Labs Are Vital 2013 Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine

EFCC and Labs Are Vital™ are pleased to announce the second EFCC-Labs Are Vital Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine, sponsored by Abbott. The Award will be given to the best published paper, as judged by an independent panel of experts, which demonstrates improved outcomes (clinical and/or economic) arising out of the application or improved utilisation of an in-vitro diagnostics test. The award was announced at IFCC/EuroMedLab 2011 in Berlin, and will be presented at IFCC/EuroMedLab 2013 in Milano. Thereafter it will be awarded every two years at an EFCC conference. The Award will consist of a certificate and the sum of 15,000 Euro. The award’s leaflet can be downloaded at http://efcclm.eu/downloads/
From the National Societies

Bulgarian National Congress Hosts International Experts on the black sea (Sept 7-10 2011)

By Prof. Kamen Tzatchev
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The seventh Conference on Bulgarian Laboratory Medicine took place in the resort Zlatni Piassatzi (Golden Sands) situated on the Black Sea coast between Varna on the South and the picturesque resorts Albena and Balchik to the North.

The success of the Meeting stemmed from the excellent work done by its Chairman, Prof. Tzatchev, and the Scientific Board of Bulgarian Society of Clinical Laboratory. Contributing factors were the very successful selection of topics, the high level of all 73 presentations (28 plenary lectures including 13 from foreign leading experts and 45 very good posters), the excellent social programs that opened facilities to additional discussions and consolidation of links between participants, as well as the marvelous weather throughout the meeting.
From the National Societies

Greece: Training of Laboratory Medicine Specialists in Greece

by Dr. Alexander Haliassos MD, PhD, EurClinChem, Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry-Clinical Biochemistry on behalf of the Greek National Clinical Chemistry Registration Committee

The Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry-Clinical Biochemistry (GSCCCB) was founded in 1989 by scientists who were working in the clinical laboratories in the state hospitals of Greece.

The GSCCCB decided to start a voluntary Register for specialists in clinical chemistry. The main problem that the GSCCCB had to solve in the process of establishing the Register in Greece was the lack of proper and official education and training for scientists that had been working for many years in the State or private clinical laboratories. Many of them had as many as 20 years of service. In order to overcome this situation the Board of the GSCCCB decided to organize an intensive educational program for all the colleagues, independent of their professional experience. The educational program comprised a series of 18 seminars each one dedicated to a different part of the clinical chemistry content as it is described in the EC4 Syllabus. At the end of each seminar, there was a voluntary written examination, which comprised of 24 multiple-choice questions. For each participant, the attendance to the seminar and the performance in the examination were graded up to a maximum grade of 10 points. Successful completion of the Educational program led to a Certificate of Competence.

The seminars were attended by both members and nonmembers of the GSCCCB. This successful massive educational activity of the Greek Society raised the scientific level of clinical chemistry professionals in our country and had also a positive impact on the level of laboratory medicine services provided in our country. In its November 2005 meeting in Prague, the EC4 Registration Commission decided, after voting among the European countries that the standards of the Greek Register were equivalent to the standards of the European Register. Today, the Greek Register has 224 members and more than 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 2011; 21(1): 30-7
The original Israel Society for Clinical Biochemistry (the ISCB) was established in 1981, by consolidation of two smaller organizations, the Israel Society for Clinical Pathology, established in 1971 (which was academically oriented) and the Israel Society of Clinical Laboratory Directors, established in 1973 (which was management oriented). In 1999, ISCB incorporated the Hematology division of clinical laboratory professionals, forming a new organization – Israel Society for Clinical Laboratory Sciences – ISCLS. Subsequently, the Microbiology division joined the society, which now encompasses all Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

The ISCLS carries out a number of scientific activities. The major activity is the annual two-day convention of the ISCLS. Other activities include four to five half-day seminars on clinical topics and their relationship to specific aspects of clinical laboratory activities, as well as several half-day workshops on pertinent professional topics.

There are three academic programs in Israel awarding a Bachelor of Science degree in Clinical Laboratory Sciences. All graduates are eligible for a license to practice the profession. At each annual ISCLS convention, citation is given to members of the society: Prizes are awarded to members for outstanding research, and to the best posters presented at the convention. Scholarships are awarded to outstanding post-graduate students (members).

The Executive Board of the ISCLS comprises of nine members. The Audit Committee includes three members. The members of the present Board, elected in 2008, are: Nurit Algur – President; Prof. Michael Mayer – Past President; Dr. George Prajgrod – Treasurer; Dr. Varda Deutsch – National Representative; Prof. Yardena Nordenberg; Dr. Bracha Sheinberg; Dr. Orit Shimron; Dr. Nurit Rosenberg; Dr. Yoram Keness; Dr. Shlomo Fytlovich. Past presidents of the ISCLS have been: Prof. Aryeh Scheinberg, Dr. Jacob Zaidman, Prof. Oren Zinder, Prof. Michael Mayer, Dr. Daniella Harell, Dr. Rachel Golan, and Dr. Adina Bar-Haim

Contact us
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From the National Societies

Latvia: Increasing Awareness of the Importance of STIs and their Potential Health Impact

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

To increase awareness of the importance of Sexually Transmitted Infections and their potential health impact, it is necessary to convince health professionals that these infections have a significant public health impact, as well individual impact. As with HIV, such an approach could increase awareness of the significance of STIs, their impact on populations, and the need to adequate diagnostic, care and prevention / control, capacity. This requires effective advocacy at European and country level, “so said the members of scientific committee of European Conference of National Strategies for Chlamydia Trachomatis and Human Papillomavirus (NSCP conference) during their meeting in May 25-27, 2011, in Jurmala (Latvia). Full Conference Report will be published soon at www.cthpv.org.

The International Conference of National Strategies for TORCH complex, Chlamydia trachomatis, and Human Papillomavirus will be held in November 15-16, 2012, in Kiev (Ukraine). The conference will assist to provide guidance about national strategies for TORCH complex, Chlamydia trachomatis, and Human papillomavirus (HPV) early detection, control, and treatment. This event will expand the achievements of already traditional Ukrainian annual TORCH conferences in November. Conference President is Prof. George N. Drannik, President of Ukrainian society of Allergology and clinical immunology. Please visit www.iecclm.org to find information about the conference.

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 Prof. Harald zur Hausen who shared the 2008 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his work on papillomaviruses and cervical cancer to act as Conference President will provide a high scientific level for the meeting and will assist to convince health professionals that these infections have a significant public health impact, as well individual impact. Please visit www.cthpv.org to find information about the conference. The 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 Program.
From the National Societies

The Netherlands: Impressions of SFBC Symposium in Paris on Laboratory Management in Europe, April 2011

by Dr. Huib Storm, National Representative The Netherlands

On April 8-9, 2011, the French Society of Clinical Biology gathered some 20 national EFCC representatives from European societies in Paris for an interesting symposium, Laboratory Management in Europe,” and, noblesse oblige, the French created the right atmosphere for a fruitful and inspiring discussion about the crucial elements of our Laboratory Medicine profession. It will be interesting to see whether the number of laboratories in France will decrease in the near future. It will stimulate the harmonization process throughout Europe with regard to patient service, best practices, EC4 register, and training
From the National Societies

"Laboratory Medicine at Clinical Interface" - the 18th National Congress of Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine

By Dr Camelia GRIGORE

Between 25 - 28 May, one week after the World Lab Congress 2011, the Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine organized, in Sibiu, the 18th National Congress of Laboratory Medicine entitled "Laboratory Medicine at Clinical Interface". The Congress introduced a new concept, bringing together medical laboratory specialists with clinicians, beneficiaries of their work and partners in the extended medical team. Around 400 people participated in the event, medical doctors and scientists connected to the laboratory field, pharmacists and students in medicine and pharmacy, all eager to attend the conferences and visit the medical exhibition related to the Congress.
Mandatory Accreditation for Medical Laboratories in Romania

by Camelia Grigore, RSLM-EFCC representative

Romania first acknowledged the need to implement a quality management system according to international standards of medical laboratories in the late 1990s. Between 1998 and 2001, the Romanian Accreditation Body organized the first courses regarding the subject. In 2007, the Romanian Ministry of Health issued Order 1301/2007, providing, "Starting 1 January 2008, it is compulsory for all medical laboratories in relation with the National Health Insurance House to implement a quality management system according to ISO/EN 15189." Medical laboratories were required to have at least 10 tests accredited. It proved to be an efficient way of selecting laboratories that were competing for funds, as well as have laboratories resolve to fulfill the standards and improve their quality management system. The legislation was amended again in April 2009 when the National Health Insurance House announced, "Starting 1 January 2010, it is compulsory for all medical laboratories in relation with the National Health Insurance House to be accredited according to ISO/EN 15189 for 50% of the tests."

Were Romanian Medical Laboratories Prepared for Accreditation?

Romania did not have national guidelines regarding Good Laboratory Practices. Hospital laboratories used outdated equipment, there was no modern IT system in place, but the most pressing issue was the lack of funds to fulfill standard demands. On the other hand, laboratories operating in the private sector had access to new equipment and were able to engage human resources and funds to fulfill EU standards. This led to an increase in competition between public and private laboratories for available funding, with private laboratories taking the lead in development. Because public hospitals did not have sufficient resources to develop their capacities, a significant number of hospital labs were outsourced and private laboratories became dominant on the market. Beginning with 2008, accreditation became a key objective for medical laboratories. In March 2011, the number of accredited laboratories reached 736. Private laboratories dominate the total number of accredited laboratories (92.5% or 679 medical labs), with public laboratories lagging far behind (7.4% or 55 laboratories). It is obvious that funding was an important aspect in the accreditation process and public laboratories, receiving fewer funds, were unable to close the gap, despite the availability of very competent professionals working in the public healthcare sector.
From the National Societies

The Accreditation Process Is Complex and the Standards difficult to Achieve.
Looking at the distribution of accreditation by field, 100% of labs received accreditation on hematology tests, 95% on biochemistry, 70% on immunology, and only 45% on microbiology. Because, the National Health Insurance House requires laboratories to receive accreditation on all reimbursed tests, the lab staff is faced with the difficult task of fulfilling standards given the constraints of the current working environment and available funding. The advantages of accreditation for Romanian laboratories include harmonization of laboratory work, suitable laboratory circuits, up-to-date equipment with maintenance contracts, protocols for each lab test, modern IT systems, accurate lab reports, evidence of staff continuous medical education, increased client confidence.

Making accreditation of medical laboratories mandatory has been an important and beneficial step in the development of Romanian medical laboratories. The process has contributed to the increase in transparency and efficiency of medical laboratories, all to the benefit of the Romanian patient. Accreditation is not proof of which medical laboratory is best, but which is best at obeying the rules.
From the National Societies

In memoriam: Corneliu Chiriloiu, MD, PhD (1933-2011)

by Assoc.Prof. Dr. Manole Cojocaru, President of RSLM

Dr. Corneliu Chiriloiu (right) at the RSLM Congress 2011, Sibiu, receiving the Diploma of Excellence from Dr. Manole Cojocaru, President of RSLM (Left)

Dr. Corneliu Chiriloiu, an eminent biochemist in the “N Gh. Lupu” Institute of Internal Medicine, died on June 21, 2011. He was born in Argeș County in Romania, in 1933, and was educated at the faculty of medicine in Bucharest. He carried on a fruitful activity being successively appointed, researcher, senior researcher and head of laboratory, devoting his long career to problems of biochemistry. With his team of workers, he brought important contributions to the value of the study of enzymes in the diagnosis of hepatic, cardiovascular, renal, and hematopoietic diseases. His constant preoccupation was for the standardization of methods used in clinical laboratories. One of his main concerns was organization of postgraduate courses for specialists all over the country. He was co-founder of the Romanian Society of Clinical Laboratory and for four years was president of the society. Dr. Chiriloiu also served for many years as editor in chief of Romanian Journal of Clinical Laboratory and Medical Technique. Dr. Chiriloiu devoted a large part of his activity to the training of technicians in which he proved remarkable, always guided by his concept that teaching is a vocation. The results of his manifold activities were introduced in more than 200 publications issued in Romanian and foreign periodicals. Dr. Chiriloiu was an invaluable collaborator and a good fellow. He was a model of competence and devotion, kindness and honesty. For his valuable research activity, he was awarded in 2011 the “Diploma of Excellence” from the Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine. Aside from his lifelong devotion for his professional activity, Dr. Corneliu Chiriloiu was also a keen lover of art and culture. For his untriving research activity and for the help and guidance of many biochemists, the memory of Dr. Corneliu Chiriloiu will remain vivid in the mind of his colleagues and collaborators. He was a very kind man, genuinely devoted to the cause of laboratory medicine. His competence and hard work truly set an example for the younger generation.
From the National Societies

Strategic Framework for Quality Management and Accreditation of the Medical Laboratories in Serbia

by Sanja Stankovic, Institute for Medical Biochemistry, University School of Pharmacy & Clinical Center of Serbia

In Serbia, accreditation is granted by the Accreditation Body of Serbia (ATS) funded by the government of the Republic of Serbia. ATS became an associate member of the international Laboratory accreditation cooperation-ILAC, and it is in the process of peer evaluation with the European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA) that will grant official recognition of the certificates and reports issued by our laboratories at regional and international level by signing a multilateral agreement with EA members. It makes accreditation a passport, which facilitates access to the EU and international markets. Accreditation is voluntary in the Republic of Serbia. At this moment, only 3 medical laboratories are accredited according to ISO 15189, and 17 according to ISO 17025.

The different stages in medical laboratory accreditation include formalizing initial contact with ATS, application for obtaining accreditation, self-assessment, preassessment visit, external assessment (evaluation by team of assessors), and accreditation decision which grants accreditation. Accreditations have to be renewed every 4 years. The main benefits of accreditation are to provide prestige, excellence and accredited status, with the possibility of recognizing the strengths and the weaknesses of the medical laboratory. It is clear now that "Accreditation is a journey, and not a destination. Bon voyage!"
From the National Societies

Chamber of Biochemists: Beginning the New Age of Laboratory Practice in Serbia

by Dr. Snezana Jovicic, Institute of Medical Biochemistry, Belgrade, Serbia

For many years, the leading organization that dealt with the development of the profession of medical biochemistry in Serbia has been the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia (formerly Society of Medical Biochemists of Yugoslavia). The Chamber of Biochemists was established according to the Law of Healthcare Workers Chambers and is professional organization of medical biochemists and clinical chemists with mandatory membership for colleagues working in public healthcare institutions and private practice. In accordance with the law, the Chamber has a number of public responsibilities, including the coding of professional ethics, keeping a directory of all the members of the Chamber, issuing, renewing and rescinding the licenses for independent practice to members, representing and protecting professional interests of members and proposing the list of supervisors for external quality audit.

What are the first and obvious benefits of the work of such an organization? First, with the introduction of licenses which have to be renewed every seven years, professional development has achieved continuity. Medical biochemists and clinical chemists in Serbia today are more focused on continuous education after graduation - in order to keep their license they need to collect 24 credits per year minimum. In addition, the standard of the work of laboratories throughout the whole Republic of Serbia is significantly improving, evident in the results of our national external quality assessment scheme (SNEQAS). Furthermore, all laboratories, both in private and in public healthcare system, are encouraged and advised by the Chamber to commence the accreditation process according to standard ISO 15189. The Chamber of Biochemists of Serbia was created five years ago. We are confident the recently elected officials will continue the fruitful work of their predecessors.
From the National Societies

Serbian Seminar on Education of Medical Biochemists Today

by Snežana Jovićić, Institute of Medical Biochemistry, Clinical Center of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

Every year the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia organizes educational seminars supervised by the Chamber of Biochemists. The 14th educational seminar entitled “Education of Medical Biochemists and Improvement of Work Quality” was held last April.

In addition to distinguished speakers from Serbia, we were honored and very pleased to have two lecturers from the EC4 Register Commission – Dr. Simone Zerah and Ms. Janet McMurray. The President of the EFCC Professional Committee and Chair of the EC4 Register Commission, Dr. Simone Zerah, spoke on the EC4 Register for Specialists in Laboratory Medicine. She highlighted the structure and the perspective of the EC4 Register, described the aims of the Commission, and stressed the importance of choosing the right name for the profession and of relations with the European Commission and Parliament. Commission Secretary, Janet McMurray, elaborated about the implementation of the EU Directive on recognition of professional qualifications as applied to specialists in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine. Overall, this seminar painted a clear picture of the position of specialists in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine in Europe today. It also indicated that Serbian laboratory professionals were not far removed from their European colleagues in terms of their professional programs and regulation for practice.
From the National Societies

Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular, Pathology: A History

by Felip Antoja, Secretary of the Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology

The Sociedad Española de Bioquímica Clínica y Patología Molecular (Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology), first known as the Sociedad Española de Química Clínica, SEQC (Spanish Society of Clinical Chemistry), was founded in 1975 by Prof. Enrique Concustell with 25 Founding Members. It is presently presided over by Prof. Francisco Alvarez. The first scientific meeting was held in the first year, and the General Assembly of members created the first two committees: Education and Quality. The Commission of Units, Standards and Nomenclature rapidly followed in 1977, and a relationship with the IUPAC Committee of Clinical Chemistry was established in 1978. The same year the SEQC organized its First National Congress, which was followed by an International Symposium on Automation in Clinical Chemistry in 1979: this was the beginning of the future International Congress of Automation. The Scientific Committee that joined all the commissions and working groups, and the first Bulletin (Newsletter) were created the same year. In 1992, SEQC created the Publications Committee, which publishes books and translations of NCCLS documents in addition to the newsletter and the scientific journal.

The year 1980 saw the creation of the Quality Control Commission with the initial participation of 147 laboratories. This achievement was however marred by the premature death of the Society’s President Prof. Enrique Concustell, in a car accident. The 1980’s reflected an intense scientific involvement of the SEQC. The first issue of Society’s journal Quimica Clinica appeared in 1982. It was also the same year that the Society organized the First International Congress on Automation and New Technologies in Barcelona, and that was followed by a second congress in 1984. In 1986, it hosted the Third Mediterranean and Near East African Congress of Clinical Chemistry in Seville.
From the National Societies

At the local level, the SEQC has regularly organized courses on various topics and annual scientific “Jornadas” since 1987. The scientific activities culminated in 1990 with the organization of the joint IX National Congress, the IV International Congress on Automation and New Technologies and the II International Congress of TDM-Tox in Barcelona with 1,300 registered participants and 1,400 m2 of commercial exhibitors. In 1993, the SEQC changed its name to the “Sociedad Española de Bioquímica Clínica y Patología Molecular” (Spanish Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Molecular Pathology) to reflect the scientific and professional development that had occurred in the last 20 years. The acronym SEQC, is however still widely used, as it is deeply rooted in the professional community. The establishment of the Society’s website in 1997, which coincided with new phase of the annual education program, is another hallmark of the SEQC history as it led in 1992 to the creation of the IFCC Rincón Iberoamericano website that was hosted and maintained by the Society for many years. The involvement of the SEQC in the development of the profession has never faltered through the years. It did so by organizing or sponsoring National and International meetings such as the Congreso Nacional del Laboratorio Clínico and the 3rd International Symposium of the Federation of European Societies on Trace Elements and Minerals (FESTEM) in Santiago de Compostela in 2007, and the 22nd AACC International Symposium on Critical and Point-of-Care testing. In terms of publication, the Society together with 2 other sister societies have sponsored the new journal Revista del Laboratorio Clínico since 2008. Nowadays, SEQC numbers more than 2,100 members, of which over 300 are involved in commissions, committees, and working groups including those of IFCC/EFC.
The standard ISO 151891, conceived to be applicable world-wide, states more or less explicitly that the clinical laboratory is a laboratory where examinations related to biology, microbiology, immunology, chemistry, immunohematology, hematology, biophysics, cytology, pathology, or other, are done in materials derived from the human body for purposes related to healthcare. In many countries there is controversy about the classification of the above disciplines or specialties. Recently, the Spanish Government has answered and clarified the old question: is, for example, clinical (bio)chemistry a medical specialty, or it is an independent specialty of health sciences, as pharmacy, dentistry, or nursing are (in Spain as well as in other countries in the world)? Obviously, the same question applies for the rest of specialties forming the clinical laboratory sciences. This response has been made by means of a Royal Decree (an Order in Council). The aim of this Order, among other issues, is to establish and classify the specialties in the broad field of health sciences. The Order divides the specialties of health sciences in five groups: Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy, Psychology and Multidisciplinary specialties.

Regarding those specialties that may be considered related to the clinical laboratory, the Order classifies the following specialties of health sciences as multidisciplinary specialties: Clinical Biology (Clinical Analyses), Biological Chemistry (Clinical Biochemistry), Immunology, Microbiology-Bacteriology (Microbiology and Parasitology), Pathological Anatomy (Anatomic Pathology) and Hematology-Hemotherapy (in part Biological Hematology). The other two specialties of health sciences directly related with the clinical laboratory, are classified as medical specialties.

As the above classification is more or less the same in many countries around the world, when talking or writing internationally (not for a specific country), it would be respectful to the clinical laboratory professional community to avoid the nouns or adjectives biology/biological, chemistry/chemical, medicine/medical, and pharmacy/pharmaceutical in the classification of the different specialties of the clinical laboratory sciences.
From the National Societies

References


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