EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

EuroLabNews

THE EFLM BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Issue n.1/2022

EFLM Connects National Societies of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine and Creates a Platform for all European "Specialists in Laboratory Medicine"

In this issue

GREETING FROM THE NEW EFLM PRESIDENT

Greeting from the new EFLM President

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a big honour and privilege for me to start serving to the EFLM community as the President of the EFLM Executive Board. I am prepared to take the lead role, and with other equally motivated members of the EFLM Executive Board and officers, we will build upon the solid foundations on which the Federation is based identifying new opportunities and strategies in which Laboratory Medicine can influence patient care. I am fully committed to ensuring that the EFLM will remain as the leading organisation representing Laboratory Medicine in Europe.

I would like to express our thanks to the Past EFLM Presidents, Executive Board members and officers of the Functional Units for their voluntary services, contributions, knowledge, and enthusiasms to build a strong and continuously growing Federation which serves to its members and provides leadership in laboratory medicine at the European level and beyond. Their contributions will be remembered always with great appreciation and respect.

I would like to express our thanks to the outgoing members of the EFLM Executive Board, Prof. Michael Neumaier and Prof. Giuseppe Lippi for their outstanding contributions to the EFLM over the past years.

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Foreword

by Harjit Pal Bhattoa, Editor EFLM EuroLabNews

First and foremost, the EuroLabNews Team wish you all a very prosperous Happy New Year! Stepping into another year where COVID-19 pandemia is still dictating our everyday activities, we would warmly like to offer quite a few online events that, against the odds, will help keep us abreast with all the Professional developments in the field of Laboratory Medicine. This issue commences with the Greetings from the new EFLM President Tomris Ozben. The constitution of the EFLM Executive Board for the upcoming 2 years is also presented. As a milestone for the EFLM, the launch of the much-awaited EFLM Syllabus Course is announced. The change in mandate for the EFLM Science Committee is announced by the EFLM Executive Board. A series of webinars on Lessons in Immunochemistry under the auspices of the EFLM is presented, where it would be advised to note the dates to get the latest developments from the experts in the field. Ana-Maria Simundic presents her interviews with past EFLM Presidents and Senior EFLM Officers. The EFLM President, Tomris Ozben has continued the tradition of "Coffee with the President" presenting interviews with prominent EFLM personalities. The EFLM conveys its deepest condolences on the sad demise of Per Hyltoft

to be continued on page 2

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...continued from Foreword

Petersen a pioneer in his field on Laboratory Medicine. Silvia Cattaneo from the EFLM Office call our attention to vacancies in functional units under the EFLM Education & Training Committee. As our signature infographics, Serkan Bolat elegantly summarizes the latest publication on biological variation. Mark your calenders for various EFLM Academy webinars, where a Professional catharsis is guaranteed by the prominent experts. The dates for the 6th EFLM Conference on Preanalytical Phase and 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference are announced and past EFLM events summarized. Changing of the guard is announced by the Italian and Spanish EFLM National Societies. The Serbian, Croatian and Spanish National Societies present their latest activities. Under its regular column, the IFCC corner presents global perspectives in Laboratory Medicine. The Calendar of Events lists all major happenings with its usual and unfortunate COVID-19 alert.

...continued Greeting from the new EFLM President

Although, they will not be in the new Board, we are confident that their interest and contributions to EFLM will continue; we will work closely to benefit from their long-years' experience and knowledge.

I wish to thank and congratulate Prof. Ana-Maria Šimundić during her presidency for her outstanding work, contributions, vision, ideas, knowledge, transparency, and leadership motivating and encouraging EFLM officers and Board members to take part to the teamwork for several EFLM projects. She will stay as the EFLM Past-President in the new Board providing us an opportunity to benefit from her great knowledge of EFLM and her ideas. I also congratulate and say a very "welcome" to the new EFLM President-Elect, Prof. Mario Plebani and EFLM Secretary, Dr Snežana Jovičić.

In the recent years, EFLM activities have increased steadily. EFLM services and contribution to the improvement of Laboratory Medicine are significant and recognized widely. This outstanding success of EFLM has been achieved by the voluntary service, effort, and time of >200 laboratory scientists from member societies working at the various EFLM Functional Units. Thanks to the EFLM officers and member societies that have supported EFLM throughout the years. Their continuous contribution and loyalty have made possible the accomplishment of numerous EFLM tasks and projects.

EFLM needs a dedicated and professional management. The President and members of the Executive Board and officers of the Functional Units have to devote commitment and time in order not only to maintain, but also to improve EFLM functions and activities contributing significantly to the progress of Laboratory Medicine and to the development of its professionals. The new Executive Board will take the EFLM flag further while maintaining the previous activities and developing new projects with the expertise, knowledge, and new ideas of the Board members and EFLM officers working enthusiastically in different functional units.

The EFLM Executive Board will be happy to receive the ideas, comments, suggestions, and complaints of the national societies and IVD industry partners and invites them to join actively to EFLM in its efforts, to work together and to strengthen the leadership role of EFLM in advancing laboratory medicine as well as in improving quality of healthcare and medical laboratories in Europe. We can achieve our common aims only through our collaborative action and effort.

I would like to mention some EFLM activities and projects that will be developed in the next years.

- We are looking forward to having your great interest and attendance to the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference which will be a unique opportunity to know, to understand, to question and to participate to the orientation of Laboratory Medicine in Europe focusing on priorities and objectives for the next years. The EFLM Strategic Conference series aim to address and discuss recent developments and challenges in our field of profession, Laboratory Medicine. The general goal of this Conference will focus on important aspects in Laboratory Medicine in which further strategic actions/measures should be identified and agreed. The 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference will not be held in the traditional onsite format due to the highly unpredictable situation of COVID-pandemic which may prevent physical attendance of our colleagues, participants and industry partners to the Conference and hinder our ability to guarantee their safety and protect their health which has been always our priority. Therefore, the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference will be held **fully online (virtual)** on May 25-27, 2022, using the state-of-the-art technical solutions including virtual exhibition stands allowing chat and video conferencing between the attendees and stand representatives.

- EFLM is proud to inform the recent establishment of the **"EFLM Task Force-Green Labs"** aimed to create guidelines, criteria, and key recommendations for sustainable practices in clinical laboratories (Green Lab Guide) and to implement a system to guide European Laboratories towards the transition to Green Labs and to monitor the status of Green Labs along the years by issuing an annual EFLM Green Labs Certification.

- EFLM Office will be strengthened, increasing the number of office staff employed by EFLM starting January 2022.

- The new Revised EuroMedLab Guidelines approved by EFLM & IFCC Executive Boards will be effective starting in 2025 which will result in strengthening the financial situation of EFLM, providing financial stability and robustness of income, and a healthy balance between income and expenses.

- I am looking forward to having fruitful collaborations with the EFLM Board members, officers, National Societies and IVD sector in the ongoing and future activities of EFLM.

With my best regards
Yours

Tomris Ozben
EFLM President

Wishing the new EFLM board the best success for the incoming years

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EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMS

Change of Chair in the EFLM Science Committee (C-S)

Reported by Tara Rolić, member of EFLM CC, WG PP

Gratitude to Prof. Eric Kilpatrick, outgoing Chair of the Science Committee

Professor Kilpatrick has concluded his third term on January 1, 2022. During his three terms, he has been the leader of the largest EFLM Committee, "Science" consisted of eight Working Groups and four Task/Task and Finish Groups with 143 full members/corresponding members/experts and young scientist. His main task was cooperation and collaboration with Committee members coming from 38 countries. During his terms, C-S has published 16 publications. Several important EFLM projects have been performed during his term as the Chair of C-S. Thanks to the efforts of Prof. Kilpatrick, the Science Committee has gained recognition and a high profile among laboratory medicine professionals. It is hard to list all the projects performed during his 6 years' work which were supervised by him without forgetting anything. The efforts of the C-S have granted enormous success in many important aspects of Laboratory Medicine: pre- and post-analytical phases, biological variation, urinalysis, cardiac markers, and chronic kidney disease. Reliable and correct analysis results and care of patients have been main goals of this Committee and EFLM has enhanced its visibility through the dedicated work of the C-S under his leadership as the Chair of C-S. The EFLM Executive Board would like to express their thanks to Prof. Kilpatrick and appreciates the valuable contribution of the work that has been accomplished as the Chair of the Science Committee throughout his term of office., He is leaving for his successor, Prof. Michel Langlois an excellent foundation where to start and build upon this groundwork. The EFLM Executive Board wishes the best to Prof. Kilpatrick in future scientific and professional activities and career.

Introducing Prof. Michel Langlois

From the beginning of 2022, EFLM Executive Board has appointed Prof. Michel Langlois as the next Chair of the Science Committee. Prof. Langlois has collaborated with his predecessor, Prof. Kilpatrick as the Chair of the Working Group Guidelines as well as the Chair of the Task & Finish Group "Laboratory Testing for Dyslipidemia" and member of the Working Group "Cardiac Markers". Prof. Langlois is a distinguished professional in Laboratory Medicine, and a well-known EFLM officer for 11 years. His most valuable achievement was establishing collaboration of the EFLM with the European Atherosclerosis Society which has resulted in preparation of joint guidelines and harmonization of lipid measurements. The expertise of Prof. Langlois as the President of the Belgian Atherosclerosis Society, as well as Past-President of the Royal Belgian Society of Laboratory Medicine, will certainly contribute to his new task in EFLM. Additionally, his previous experience, work and services in different EFLM Working and Task groups will be valuable in his new role. The EFLM Executive Board is therefore confident that Prof. Langlois will be a significant and valuable successor of the former Chair of C-S and will continue in successful direction bringing fresh, new ideas in C-S. The EFLM Executive Board wishes Prof. Michel Langlois all the best and fruitful work as the new Chair of the Science Committee.

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

2022–23

EFLM LESSONS IN IMMUNOCHEMISTRY

A series of 8 live webinars of 90' each (4 in 2022 and 4 in 2023) introducing to the principles and applications of Clinical Immunochemistry in Laboratory Medicine

Lesson 1. Hypertension: the role of laboratory in differential diagnosis

24 February 2022, 16.00 CET

Lesson 2. Vitamin D status: the role of laboratory

26 May 2022, 16.00 CET

Lesson 3. Heart failure and NT-proBNP

13 September 2022, 16.00 CET

Lesson 4. Androgen excess or deficiency: the role of testosterone and free testosterone

24 November 2022, 16.00 CET

The dates for the lessons in 2023 will be defined in the second semester 2022

REGISTRATION:

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Interviews with Past EFLM Presidents and Senior EFLM Officers

Reported by Ana-Maria Šimundić, EFLM Past President

In this edition of our new section, we publish an interview with Prof. Ian Watson, the fourth EFLM President (2011-2013). Additionally, Prof. Watson served as the president of International Association of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology and The Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (UK). Throughout his successful and fruitful career he has made substantial contributions in the field of toxicology and therapeutic drug monitoring. It is my great honor and pleasure to present this interview to the EFLM community.

In your professional career, you have served in many leading roles both in the UK and internationally.
What was your motivation?

Good question! The examples of how your mentors have shone informs your views as to how you can develop; I wanted to engage professionally with colleagues and organisations to address deficiencies, progress practice and felt that I could make a contribution to address such issues. Sometimes it was clinical or scientific issue, but there is often an element of politics, an engagement with others, who have an influence or interest in the area and to positively work with them; there is great satisfaction in working with others to achieve mutually agreed goals and the recognition when colleagues concur with your proposals. However you have to accept that others may not agree with you, that you have to accept criticism, hopefully constructive, and realise that wider considerations may cause difficulties, perhaps insuperable; such experiences round you as an individual and make you more politically aware, so that when one serves in leading roles you have an understanding and perspective of the challenges and solutions that will enable communal goals to be achieved.

What was in it for you?
There is a great deal of satisfaction in initiating and participating in the development of a project, whether it is a research project, addressing a clinical problem or developing a meaningful policy. Such interaction necessitates working with others and hence creates relationships that develops one's network, a helpful foundation for future interactions.
In developing in one's own scientific area, the recognition that arises from that, the participation in national and international meetings, developing networks is professionally satisfying and personally enriching as one is often exposed to very different viewpoints and approaches that can shed a new light on a topic. It is also enriching to engage with others, particularly internationally not only for the different professional perspectives, but also the insight offered into different cultures and their history.

If you would need to name a role that was most rewarding to you, what would it be?
Tricky to answer! I guess that those roles, such as President or Laboratory Director are potentially the most satisfying as the proposals and actions taken reflect your direct engagement as a leader.
Developing National Guidelines on laboratory support for the poisoned patient with the UK National Poisons Information Service or on CSF Xanthochromia for detection of sub-arachnoid haemorrhage, specifying how laboratories should respond to clinical questions in these areas, defining the type of service required knowing this is about delivering good patient care, were immensely satisfying; adoption by the profession of these guidelines and the subsequent probing by others results in an effective and comparable service between laboratories and to clinical services; this is very rewarding.
I have had the privilege of being a President to three different organisations, these all had different challenges and demands reflecting the organisations' maturity and engagement with other organisations and policymakers; it would be invidious to choose between them as each was rewarding at the time and I look back on all three with a paternal affection and pleasure as they continue to develop.
Internationally leading EFLM was rewarding as we developed and delivered on our policies on the science of laboratory medicine, our place in the international arena and our inter-relationships with other like-minded organisations. Establishing and serving as Foundation Vice-President, then President of the International Association of Therapeutic Drug Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology in the early 1990s was hugely challenging, IATDMCT has flourished and is an important, robust and effective international organisation. The Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (UK) was established in 1953, the profession was facing significant political challenges and the ACB was undergoing its own evolution; it continues to have an important influence as a leading organisation in laboratory medicine.

You were the fourth EFLM President. Your term of office was during 2011-2013. What were the greatest challenges during your Presidency? How would you describe EFLM in those days?

EFLM was only 4 years old when I took office, the first two Presidents sharing a term reflecting the progenitor organisations of FESCC and EC4, the merger of which has enabled European Laboratory Medicine to become a coherent and powerful voice projecting our profession across Europe and Internationally.

Merging and continuing the work of the two organisations was evaluated by my predecessors and the initiation of new topics of interest were being developed, though funding was an issue; Rita Horvath had initiated discussions with IFCC to receive more funds from Euromedlab, a consequence of an agreement that had been made with FESCC, which we both negotiated this during our tenures, eventually achieving a more satisfactory outcome.

However my experience of leading previous organisations alerted me to the lack of legal protection for EFLM officers; as EFLM was not incorporated as an officially recognised organisation i.e. by a Government, that would mean each Executive Board and Council member was individually and severally liable for any costs and liabilities at their personal expense and risk arising from activities undertaken for EFLM; in other words they would have to pay any losses which could include having to sell their house! Incorporation ensured all officers had limited liability protection as a legally registered Sans-but-Lucratif organisation; we were registered in Belgium and are subject to Belgian laws on our financial reporting. This was a complex exercise as we had to get the legal framework right, consult with and have the approval of all member societies and then implement the necessary procedures.

I was particularly pleased to ensure that there was a Young Scientist position ascribed to each scientific working group and this has resulted in their development into Full members on these working groups, indeed in some cases Chairing the group, this initiative strengthens EFLM for the future.

One item of note, in the early days we were referred to as EFCC and this often led to confusion with IFCC in conversations within and outwith organisations, the abbreviation was changed to EFLM which reinforces our distinctive identity and is immediately recognisable.

How do you see the future of EFLM?

EFLM has become a leader in the projection of Laboratory Medicine not just in Europe, but internationally. As the IFCC Region with the greatest number of active member societies we have led changes to IFCC structures and approach and I trust that is continuing in a positive way.

EFLM represents geographical Europe and will continue to support member societies seeking to ensure ongoing development of high standards of science and clinical practice, there are many current examples and no doubt there will continue to be many more in the future.

The opportunity for political activity is more difficult, but the European Union encompasses a significant number of member societies and engagement with the MEPs and Commission officers is important to ensure policies take account of our professional views; no doubt the IVD Regulation implementation will test this view! To that end working with like-minded clinical and scientific organisations within our ambit as well as IVD manufacturers and organisations is an essential activity.

The EFLM Executive Board is composed of members voted by EFLM National societies, who come from different cultures, have different priorities, views and preferences. That is not the team you select, but you have to work with that team and manage all kinds of important projects, towards common European goals. Is it difficult to lead such a heterogeneous team? Could you describe your experience in the Executive Board during your presidency?

As you say the composition of the Executive Board is not my selection, or any President's, and changes with time as terms of office expire, as with all organisations like EFLM with such Boards it is necessary to understand the context of the various individuals experience and to comprehend what their strengths are and let them express their proposals and views. There has to be space for robust, but respectful, exchanges as such debates can elicit facets of a topic previously unconsidered and typically enables a consensus to be reached; it should be very rare that a formal vote needs to be called.

As you get to know each other and the need for leadership in aspects of developing policy and projects, then responsibility can and should be apportioned appropriately amongst the Board. I would say that the Board I led was composed of distinguished individuals, typically a collegiate atmosphere prevailed.

The EB has occasionally to take positions that clash with those of other organisations, it may be stressful, but if it is necessary it was done, it was important that there was collective responsibility and all Board members backed such decisions, that there was this consensus made my position as President stronger in discussions and negotiations.

There are also other difficult decisions: on funding projects, support for scientific meeting proposals, educational activities the decisions of the Board may result in benefit or disappointment; decisions on changing personnel in certain roles may be required to enable progress or change focus, which can be difficult; the Executive Board is there to make such decisions and must not shirk them and I don't think we did; as they say 'you take the rough the with smooth'.

Your field of expertise was toxicology. Could you name some major achievements, milestones and future challenges in that area?

I gave the ACB Foundation Lecture in 2011 on the developments in Toxicology over the course of my career, unsurprisingly there have been immense changes in analytical approaches and the clinical interventions in poisoning have undergone several complete changes in approach. The most significant change has been in the explosion of substance misuse; detection sensitivities and methodologies have greatly improved, but the best toxicology investigations require sophisticated equipment and the analysts to operate them, interpretation of the results requires a further level of expertise all of which are in short supply; too many 'toxicology' investigations rely on automated immunoassays that while easy to do are potentially non-specific and cover a very limited spectrum of substance classes, though they may serve an immediate, but limited, clinical purpose.

Toxicology is always going to be challenged by new compounds being used and alternative matrices requiring better analytical performance and understanding of toxicokinetics; where once urine was the matrix of choice to detect opiates, cannabis or cocaine use alternative matrices such as saliva, hair, sweat are used for these substances, but also amphetamines of various types, opioids and more.

Therapeutic Drug Monitoring (TDM) is often conducted in parallel with the toxicology service and although there is a very limited, but specific demonstrable need for TDM, it can be a vital tool for optimising dosing for certain classes of drugs, where once TDM focused on anticonvulsants, digoxin and aminglycoside antibiotics, the repertoire has expanded to include: immunosuppresants, anti-cancer agent, other antimicrobials have become established and are all subject to sophisticated pharmacokinetic prediction as any issue of the IATDMCT journal Therapeutic Drug Monitoring illustrates. The increasing use of immunological therapies in oncology and elsewhere may be the next frontier.

The effect of climate changes is more and more obvious. How do they relate to our profession? Is there something we should be concerned about? How can we as a profession contribute in that respect?

The Green Laboratory: now there is a challenge! Laboratory Medicine's need for high throughput analysers and the large range of chemicals and disposables consequent on that pose a significant challenge. While we have thankfully moved on from the early days of strong acids and potentially dangerous chemicals our hardware then was recyclable, so we need to return to effective sustainability of the latter and minimising the former; this is an issue being acted on by regulators, as we found with the EU plan to axe Triton X, that significantly impacts on our ability to provide effective analytical systems: we need to be alert to these challenges and try to obviate such compounds ahead of regulators so we do not suffer disruption to our services.

The use of single-use plastics, key in minimising sample carry-over, needs to be obviated and where essential must be recyclable, a challenge given they have been used to deal with biological samples. Management of both liquid and solid waste materials will become increasingly stringent, so minimising waste volumes will be key. It flows from this that the energy requirements to manufacture the capital equipment, and the consumables whether liquid of solid must be minimised and as instrument contracts are so valuable there is a need to tackle these issues in partnership between the laboratory and the IVD manufacturers.

How did you approach retirement? How do you like to spend your time?

The old adage is: 'Do not retire from, but retire to', in other words you should look at retirement as a new chapter in your life, not the end; it can be a real challenge to recognise that the responsibilities, influence and recognition earned through a career will fade.

I had planned for this change by recognising that an enjoyable retirement required health and that golf offered an opportunity to do something difficult and healthy, I hadn't quite realised the degree of humility it engenders too! For some time I continued to engage in professional activities involving self in the promotion of Patient Focused Laboratory Medicine. As time progresses you recognise that you are not in the zeitgeist of professional activity, which is key for relevance and hence eventually one must, in my opinion, withdraw.

My wife and I have been able to make extended visits to near and far-flung countries, pre-COVID, as well as enjoying our grandchildren.

Those who had the opportunity to attend the 3rd EFLM-UEMS conference in Liverpool, during 7-10th October 2014, had the opportunity to listen to your band. I was one of them and you were amazing! How did you learn to play drums? Do you still play drums? What kind of music do you play?

The benefits of a mis-spent youth! I guess it was listening to rock 'n' roll and the Beatles and the tonality of drums really appealed, I bought a cheap kit and played along with the records, drove my parents, and the neighbours mad! I would practice with my band and we would play gigs in church halls.

When I went to College I took lessons from an accomplished jazz drummer, however I stopped playing not long after: career, professional and family commitments taking precedence. Some twenty years later having moved to Liverpool I picked up my sticks again to play a gig with the Southport Hospital band, a great success and we became the official hospital band; 'Bandage' was born!
Bandage played charitable gigs and we played with other bands and from meeting other musicians I formed another band 'Et Al' , which is the band you heard. We play a range of rock and blues standards plus one or two songs of our own composition.
There is nothing to compare with playing music you enjoy with like-minded musicians to an appreciative audience; regrettably COVID has halted this activity, hopefully we will recommence when we can.

For the end, as an expert and a senior colleague, what would be your advice to young individuals who wish to pursue their career in laboratory medicine? Is our education fit for the purpose? Is there something missing in our curriculum?
One of the highlights resulting from the EFLM Young Scientist programme was when the ACB had four of the young scientists speak at a session at our national meeting, they demonstrated such excellent collaborative, innovative science and their recognition of the benefits that derived to them from a network created through the EFLM structures was most satisfying.
Scientists in laboratory medicine need to not only be actively developing and applying the science, but also to be actively engaged in clinical activity. Given the range of practice across Europe there will be divergencies in approach dictated by the local clinical context. You ask about a curriculum, that implies agreement across Europe on content and consensus on levels of attainment and comparability of minimum standards for qualifications, as you know this is a fraught subject within the EU and would not necessarily apply outside that bloc. However there are some key topics that could be common, such as communication and interaction with clinicians, as well as: patients, the public, officials, governments etc with the intention to positively engage and promote the contributions of laboratory medicine, other modules could be: statistics, ethics, experimental design these are applicable to us all and would be an opportunity for EFLM to further enhance it's role.
As you know I advocate Patient Focused Laboratory Medicine (PFLM) where we, as the professionals, directly communicate laboratory medicine information to patients in the context of a clinical team. Such an approach requires appropriate training to ensure that the necessary ethical, empathetic and communication skills are attained and maintained.
One of the things the Sars COV-2 pandemic has demonstrated is the ready adoption by the population of self-testing, their recognition of the concept of confirmation of results and how there is a need for skilled oversight, such awareness would be relevant to PFLM. It is clear that centralisation of laboratories is continuing, yet localisation of primary care services and patient self-monitoring needs professional support and is an area ripe for us to develop as a profession.
Taking the initiative in these areas will ensure the continuing relevance of laboratory medicine in a rapidly changing clinical world!

COFFEE WITH THE EFLM PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

In this issue of the EFLM eNewsletter, I am happy to continue with the section that EFLM Past-President Prof. Ana-Maria Šimundić has initiated, in which we get to know EFLM officers that make EFLM what it is today.
In this edition of the "Coffee with the President" I present to you interviews with four EFLM officers: Christa Cobbaert, Barbara De la Salle, Florent Vanstapel and Abdurrahman Coşkun.
I would like to thank my guest EFLM officers for being available to share their thoughts and opinions about EFLM, our profession and give the opportunity to the large EFLM audience to get to know them better. We are all very grateful for their substantial contributions to the EFLM and its mission.
I hope you will enjoy reading these interviews and I also invite you to listen to our podcast here.

Tomris Ozben
EFLM President

When did you join EFLM? What is your current role in EFLM? What are the activities of the functional unit in which you work?

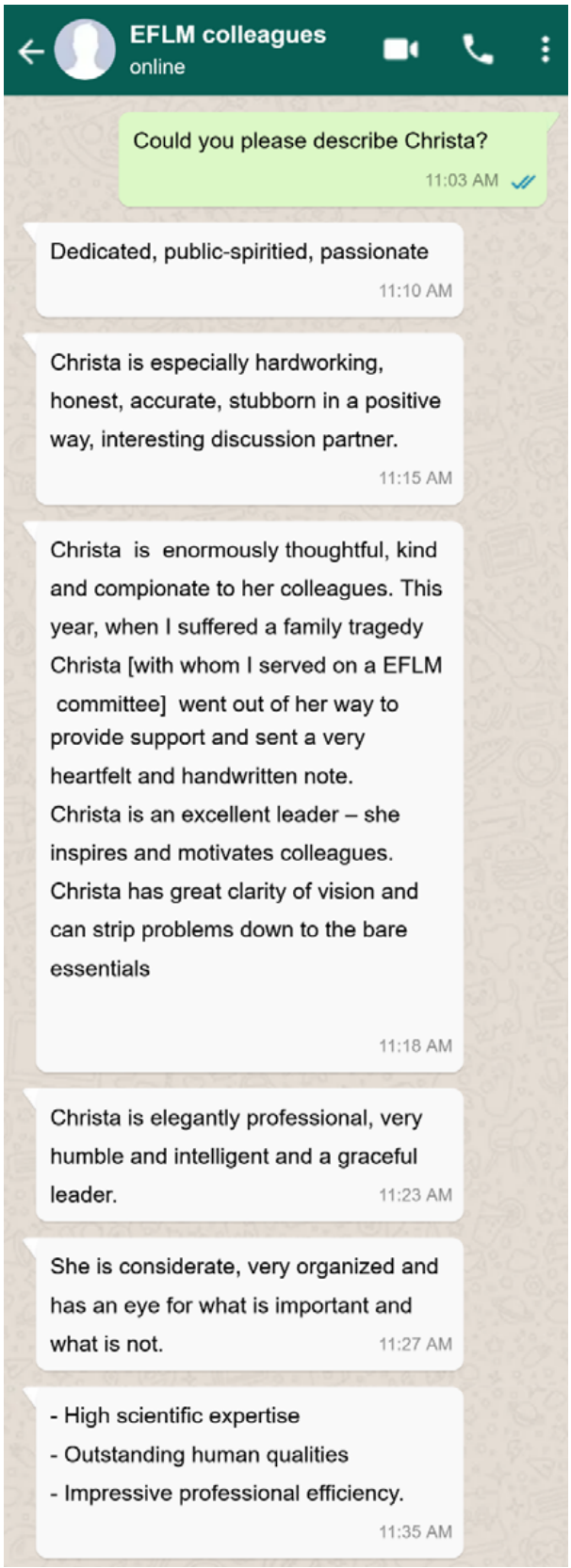
I joined EFLM in 2011 as a member of the EFLM working group on Test Evaluation, at that time chaired by Prof. Rita Horvath. The Test Evaluation working group sets standards and develops practical tools for designing research studies for the evaluation of the clinical value and impact of new biomarkers. Landmark papers are the Test Evaluation Framework paper explaining all key components of test evaluation, followed by subsequent papers on setting analytical and clinical performance criteria. Practical tools that were developed are the clinical needs checklist and clinical pathway mappings to position medical tests in the clinical care pathway. Since 2016 I chair the EFLM WG TE.
In December 2018 I became an observer for the EFLM in the IVD subgroup under the Medical Device Coordination Group of the European Commission for the IVDR 2017/746 implementation. Due to the high impact of the IVDR for the diagnostic sector, a Task Force on European Regulatory Affairs (ERA) was established which reports directly to the EFLM EB. The Task Force ERA was initially co-chaired by Prof Neumaier and me, and currently by me. The ultimate goal of the EFLM TF ERA is to guarantee EU-wide access to high-quality, affordable and safe medical tests. To have enough impact in Brussels, EFLM became a member of BioMed Alliance in Europe.

What do you like most about EFLM?

The fact that EFLM connects National Societies of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine and created a common platform for all European "Specialists in Laboratory Medicine" since its establishment in 2007. I especially like the fact that subsequent EFLM presidents provided consistent European leadership in Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine to national professional societies, the diagnostic industry and to governmental and non-governmental organisations in order to serve the public interest in healthcare. As an example: under the two last presidents -prof. Neumaier and prof. Simundic- strategic choices have been made such as the establishment of an EFLM Task Force on ERA as think tank on regulatory affairs of the EFLM EB and EFLM becoming a member of the powerful BioMed Alliance in Europe network organization. Creating political and public outreach so that EFLM and European laboratory professional members are seen and heard in Brussels and by patient organizations has become very important in this regulatory era.

How do you see EFLM in 10 years from today?

In this peri-pandemic era different leadership will be needed compared to the pre-pandemic period. People are more uncertain, populations are more unhealthy and relationships are less functional and protective. We also face several global crises that affect healthcare and diagnostics too: climate and refugee problems, public health pandemics with huge societal impact, shortage of teachers and mentors for "live" education of the next generation, ... Therefore, relevant contributions to population health, education, precision medicine, remote patient monitoring, interoperability of healtcare data etc.. are needed and can only be realized if outstanding medical lab directors, top researchers and empowering teachers execute the fundamentals of their job both **consistently and with an evolving mindset.**



EFLM can no longer solve the diagnostic healthcare problems as an institutional organization on its own. EFLM should become an agile network organization connecting to multiple relevant stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem, including regulators, politicians and health technology assessment bodies. The current approach is too fragmented because different stakeholders mainly work

from their "silo's". EFLM should scientifically contribute to the looming paradigma shift in healthcare by promoting a healthy lifespan and preventing disease through detection at an early stage, rather than to focus solely on diagnosis and treatment at advanced stages. As we live in a global world, EFLM should ensure effective representation of laboratory medicine both at European Union level and at other pan-European and global bodies. In my perception, to keep health- and sickcare affordable and sustainable, **integrative approaches and holistic leadership** are needed.

What do you like about your current job?

In my current position as head of the department of a consolidated medical laboratory in an academic setting and being involved with the three core tasks of an academic setting (diagnostics, education and research), I really enjoy the relative autonomy I have together with my staff and co-workers, as well as the direction we can give to innovation of diagnostics. We chose for a research line that contributes **to molecular definition of health and disease.** To that end we evaluate the role of **promising proteoform biomarkers**[a] using quantitative bottom-up proteomics with mass spectrometry. Mass spectrometry technology is preferred because it allows sensitive molecular characterization and quantitation of individual proteoforms of interest in an immuno-assay independent way. Mass spectrometry also enables upfront test standardization, which should become inclusive and transparently shared, before bringing tests to the market.

[a]Proteins from even a single gene can vary widely in their amino acid sequence and PTMs giving rise to a variety of proteoforms. Thus, the proteome is necessarily the set of all proteoforms expressed by an organism.

Do you have a role model? If you do, what makes this person so special?

I consider **Bibian Mentel** as a role model because of her persistence. She is/was a Dutch threefold Winter Paralympics gold-medalist and fivefold world champion para-snowboarding athlete. She suffered from aggressive bone cancer during her sport career and persisted notwithstanding 15 recurrences of her disease. She died on 29 March 2021 at the age of 48 years.
A second role model for me is Nelson Mandela because of his forgiveness and his servant leadership, notwithstanding his imprisonment from 1963-1990 at Robben Island. **Nelson Mandela** got the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1993, because of his merits against apartheid.
These two people had the strength to stay mild notwithstanding their illness (Bibian Mentel) respectively captivity (Nelson Mandela), and accomplished their sport or political goals by never giving up. According to Mandela: *"A winner is a dreamer who never gives up"*.

What are the qualities you appreciate most about people?

People who listen and are coachable themselves, as well as people who take responsibility for others and for our planet. At work, I appreciate colleagues who are accountable and are capable of creating value and empowering others to contribute.

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?

I love nature and animals, and being in the open air. We have two dogs, a female Rottweiler named Nala and a male Karabash named Mufasa, as well as chickens and a cat. I like to be active, and my favorite sport is tennis which I practice weekly outdoor.
I am currently involved in establishing a Ghana project for establishing medical care in the rural areas where Ghanese people have no access to medical care. The medical need is huge: for skin diseases less than 20 dermatologists are available for the entire country. The goal is to establish basic training and education programs for MDs and nurse practitioners to make the Ghanese people self-supportive so that the most prevalent (skin) diseases in rural areas can be diagnosed and treated. Until now, diagnoses were hard to make. Pilots have started and by exchanging pictures from patients with skin diseases, difficult diagnoses are made with the unaided eye during remote exchanges with medical experts. So far, there is no possibility nor role of diagnostic testing.

How would your spouse (wife, husband) describe you?

My husband would characterize me as someone who is persistent and never gives up, but also as somebody who is empathic and cares for the family and others, especially elderly, lonely and less fortunate people.

What are your greatest challenges?

I struggle with the very traditional and partially outdated way of performing diagnostics in laboratory medicine in the developed world. Since the establishment of radio-immunoassays and ELISA's in the past century, medical laboratories keep measuring proteins with technology that is blind to the molecular (sub)forms. As we currently face the launching of the Human Proteoform Project that unravels the complexity of biological systems coming from proteins which are expressed and circulate in human body fluids as -a mixture of- functional, dysfunctional or unfunctional proteoforms, laboratory medicine should explore and evaluate these new insights and innovative concepts. In order to have the right diagnosis in the right patient at the right time, we have to re-invent the current protein biomarkers by studying the value of these proteoforms with enabling technology such as mass spectrometry. In parallel, it should become a global objective for IVD-industry and regulators to standardize new medical tests early in the process of preparing market access. Opting for global medical test standardization early on would make diagnostic testing much more sustainable and affordable by preventing huge intermethod variability and resource-consuming (re-)standardization programs later on.

Are you good in time management?

I have excellent management assistants who assist and guide me with time management at work. Together we plan all periodic meetings per calendar year with a

fixed frequency, whereas the intermittent meetings or exchanges at short notice are discussed briefly every morning and planned in between. I always work with a structured agenda and minutes with action points which should be delivered/made available timely so that the participants have time to prepare themselves. I consider the many mails that one gets during the day as disturbing and distracting. I rather prefer brief interactions on the corridor or at the coffee machine as these create personal moments and give you instant insight into the real world practice / challenges of coworkers and staff.

What do you value most about your country and its culture?

I am Belgian from origin, and live and work in the Netherlands. As I spent half of my life in Belgium and half in the Netherlands, I enjoy both the Belgian and Dutch cultures. The two cultures are quite different. In social life Dutch are very outspoken and on the foreground, whereas Belgians are much less pronounced. Dutch are quite formal and follow the rules whereas Belgians are pragmatic and find their own way out. According to a famous sociologist, professor F. G. Droste, the way how Dutch and Flemish behave is also in our genes. I.e., due to repression in the past millennia, the "principal" inhabitants of the southern Netherlands (now Belgium) escaped to the North and settled above the rivers Maas and Rijn whereas "the Southerners" survived by adapting to their repressors (sometimes saying "yes" and doing "no").

Do you have a pet? (feel free to share its photo with us, if you like)

When did you join EFLM? What is your current role in EFLM? What are the activities of the functional unit in which you work?

I joined EFLM in 2017 as a co-representative of the EQALM organisation on the Pre-analytics working group (WG PRE) with my good colleague Gunn Berit Kristiansen from Norway. We provide a link between the two organisations. I remain a member of the WG PRE, where we develop strategy and guidelines for the reduction in harm in laboratory medicine resulting from errors in the pre-analytical phase of diagnostic testing. The membership of the WG fits well with my professional interest in quality management in laboratory medicine.

What do you like most about EFLM?

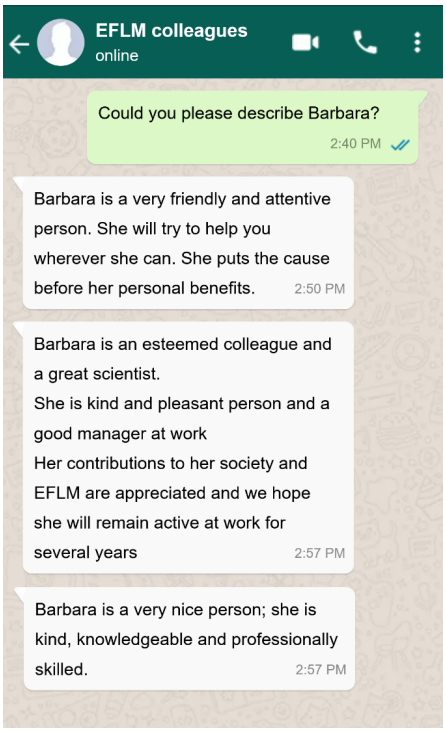
Working with colleagues in EFLM has been the most amazing opportunity to exchange ideas across Europe (and beyond) both with laboratory professionals and representatives from commercial companies. We can learn so much from professionals from all walks of life and somehow EFLM manages to bring us all together. I support the activities to improve cross-border harmonisation and value above all else the emphasis that EFLM places on educational activities. I have also had the absolute privilege to meet some of the most able and talented clinicians and laboratory scientists.

How do you see EFLM in 10 years from today?

I hope to see EFLM strengthen and consolidate its position as a meeting space and hub for the improvement of laboratory medicine services and the exchange of ideas between professionals. EFLM and other professional societies have a unique and important role in ensuring that laboratory medicine remains under the oversight of laboratory professionals, as an essential part of the patient journey, rather than just another supplier of service. I would very much like to see EFLM continue to encourage, value and listen to laboratory professionals from all specialties, beyond clinical chemistry, and appreciate the wisdom and knowledge these bring to the table.

What do you like about your current job?

I am beyond my official retirement age but still am eager to go to work each day, so there must be something I enjoy! For the past 20 years, I have worked as Manager and then Director of the UK National External Quality Assessment Service



for Haematology, building on 20 years' experience before that as a clinical scientist in laboratory haematology. My current position has given me the opportunity to remain active in science and not just be weighed down in bureaucracy, I have the most wonderful team of staff and excellent colleagues nationally in the UK NEQAS organisation and internationally amongst other EQA providers.

Do you have a role model? If you do, what makes this person so special?

I have many and they are all women. Despite the enormous advances made by women in my working lifetime (which is nearly 50 years' long now), there are still barriers to be overcome and we should look to the early pioneers. I feel great admiration for scientists such as Rosalind Franklin, who were never fully recognised, and quiet, highly intellectual women such as my chemistry teacher (Miss Thompson) at school, who could have done anything but devoted herself to education. I admire the women in my family: above all my grandmother who gave birth to my father when her husband was fighting in the trenches of World War I and then saw that son go to war 22 years later with his older brother, in World War II. I am in awe of the stoicism and determination of that generation and the sacrifices made on all sides.

What are the qualities you appreciate most about people?

It would be easy to say, "kindness" but what

I appreciate most is the ability to reflect and to change direction when needed. No-one is perfect and we should accept that we may have to listen to others.

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend your free time?

My garden, despite the faults and the mistakes I have made, contains a part of my soul. To share the space with the birds and insects that choose to join me there is my joy. While we are all concerned about the 'big' items affecting the environment, we overlook the small acts we can make to improve the world for other species, using the space on our windowsills, balconies and gardens to provide little oases of green. In recent years, I have discovered a love of singing in a choir. I am sure my voice is awful, and I don't read music, but singing is now one of my greatest joys.

How would your family members describe you?

My children always say that I was clearly the one in charge, so I decided not to ask my husband.

What are your greatest challenges?

Without a doubt, it has been to raise my children to become considerate, confident and kind adults, knowing their own minds and able to make their own way in the world. This is the same challenge faced by all parents, but it is not easy and there is no guidebook. Although they are now adults, I will never know if I have done a good job, but I live in hope. For the future, I suspect that it will be learning to slow down and pass on the baton to the generations that will come after.

Are you good in time management?

Yes and no. I can be very lazy and am very good at putting off tasks that I don't want to do, i.e., I procrastinate. I get over this by putting everything in order of priority, doing the thing that I am most reluctant to do and then rewarding myself with coffee. My favourite phrase in this situation is, "Eat the big, ugly frog first". After that, everything is easy.

What do you value most about your country and its culture?

This is difficult to ask an Englishwoman. We like to laugh at ourselves and are not good at talking about what we do well. I describe myself as a patriotic Englishwoman of probable Irish heritage, with a French name and a passion for Italian food. It allows me to support almost anyone in the Six Nations Rugby tournament. I still think that this is a tolerant country. I love the softness of the English countryside, the rugged coastline, the lack of extremes and the way we are obsessed with the weather. I was born in greater London and still live within a short train ride of the centre of the capital; I love its vibrancy, culture, good food (yes, even in England!), museums and public transport. Despite its size, London is still very green with parks and gardens and is more of a series of villages than a city of more than 10 million people. I wish we played better cricket!

Do you have a pet?

No, I don't. As a teenager, I had a wonderful crossbreed of dog, called Sindy, and she was my constant companion through some difficult periods of my life. I have also shared my home with several cats who deigned to live with me! I would not own a cat now because they kill a lot of wild birds and I consider it cruel to keep them indoors.

Coffee with Florent Vanstapel

When did you join EFLM? What is your current role in EFLM? What are the activities of the functional unit in which you work?

I can't remember an exact date. I rolled into it through membership of the Belgian Society, and by enrolling for participation in the WG ISO/A. If someone can put a date on it, then it will be Silvia. I started as a member of the WG ISO/A with Michel Vaubourdolle and Willem Huisman. I joined the latter a few times on liaison missions, and this rolled into chairing the committee. And now it becomes time to prepare for succession. I enjoy working with the young scientists. They really pull a lot of the work.

What do you like most about EFLM?

Of course I like the work of the EFLM WG ISO/A, and also the work of the TF ERA, which is instrumental in influencing the interpretation of the new EU IVDR. This is very important certainly for the professionals in the inner European Economic Space, but because of the trickle down effect also for the countries on the periphery.

EFLM caters for a pan-European audience. Lab medicine is medicine, and medicine is not only a scientific discipline, but also very much a cultural phenomenon. Catering for Europe allows different schools to coexist and learn from each other: the Anglosaxon Germanophonic, French and Latin and Slavic traditions. The selection of participants in the different EFLM WG's promotes this interaction.

I like that the syllabus project took a jump start. The WG's and the syllabus project is where the different traditions meet.

How do you see EFLM in 10 years from today?

I like that up to now the EFLM sticked to science and professional service and managed to steer clear from (geo) political arguments. I hope they will continue on this path. I would welcome a more active involvement of countries on the pan-European periphery.

Service-wise, the syllabus project will require continued investments both in resources and personnel. Many projects

fail in the long-run because of lack of these. If the EFLM manages to set-up and maintain a continuous revision process, then lasting success is assured. The profession will only retain its raison d'être if we expand the scientific and professional interests to focus on diagnostic consulting, big data analysis, transmural care, etc. The profession has to move away from technical management to medical service.

What do you like about your current job?

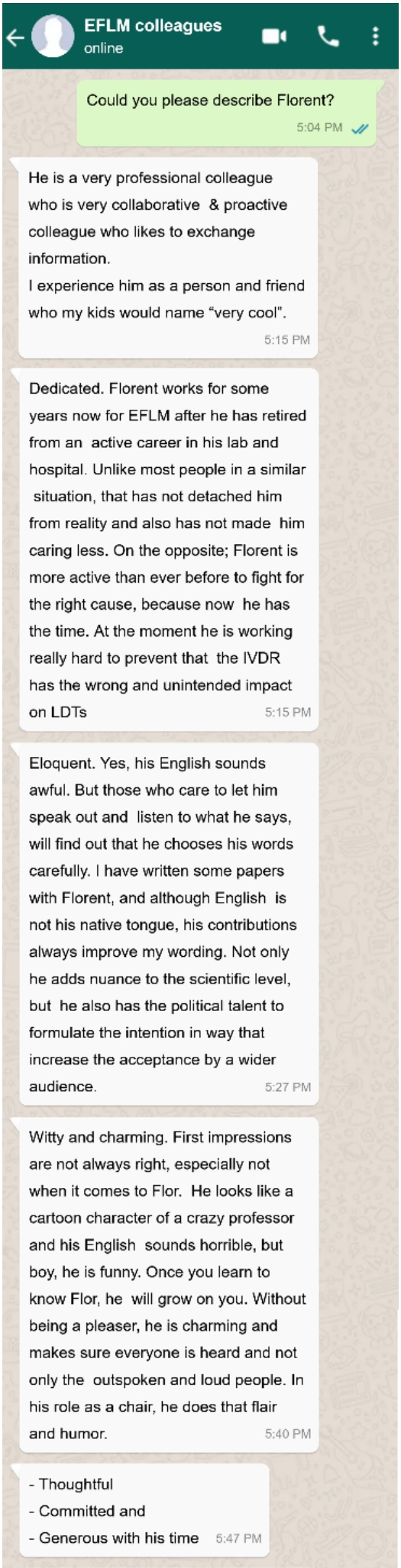
I'm retired since the fall of 2018. I like very much that I'm still involved in a project for Direct Electronic Test Requests in the old lab, and I enjoy new consulting activity at the Flemish Red Cross. I also like occasional teaching assignments, and the liaison work for the EFLM.
I occasionally act as a lead or a technical assessor for the Belgian accrediting body, BELAC. I experience that as on opportunity for continuous training.

Do you have a role model? If you do, what makes this person so special?

I changed many times professional activities during my career. As a medical student I worked in the Lab of Willy Stalmans. We worked on aspects of hepatic glycogen metabolism. He was very particular about detailed protocols, and by example thought me to write scientific papers. He also was particular about measuring enzyme activities, which we contrary to research tradition measured at multiple time points. When I joined Norbert Blanckaert at UCSF where we worked on bilirubin metabolism, he also insisted on this and it helped us to detect a hidden source of UDP-sugars interfering with our assays. It thought me that scientific progress is made not so much by confirming the expected but by explaining the unexpected. The observations threw an entirely new view on the regulation of membrane-embedded UDP-sugar transferases. Not a physico-chemical interaction with the membrane was key to understanding their regulation, but membrane-associated compartmentalization and coupled transport of cosubstrates. When I returned to my alma mater, I joined Paul Van Hecke and we started the in-vivo NMR spectroscopy core facility. From that period cooperation with different technical disciplines remains a very valuable experience. Subsequently I rejoined Norbert Blanckaert, who meanwhile had become the director of Laboratory Medicine in Leuven. My original task was to set-up the quality system for the consolidated laboratories. Later I engaged in metabolic screening for rare inherited diseases and at the end of my career in POCT.
Frequent switches are maybe not the best way to the top, but I have no regret. At every turn you get the opportunity to become a new person. So yes, I can say that I had many mentors. They came with many good advices: "If you can't convince them confuse them, LOL."; "Choose you battles wisely"; "Respect you have to earn"; "Never ask a question, if you are not sure you are going to like the answer".
I also learned that it is much more rewarding to present your data and conclusions uniting standpoints and interpretations existing in the scientific community rather than claiming novelty opposed to the work of others. The prevailing paradigm that competition is good for progress, invites authors to present their work in the latter way. Seldomly a new idea is coming from one person, but occurs simultaneously in the minds of many from open discussions and cooperation. I think that the "competition" dogma stands in the way of developing "learning" environments.

What are the qualities you appreciate most about people?

Foremost, the willingness to learn. That is to express without fear your thoughts as they pop up, defend them with fever, and happily change your mind when convinced by other arguments.
This attitude also comes with healthy loyalty, trust inspired by the shared pleasure of the learning experience.



When did you join EFLM? What is your current role in EFLM? What are the activities of the functional unit in which you work?

I joined EFLM as the National Representative of Turkish Biochemical Society in 2007. It was a great opportunity for me to follow EFLM's scientific activities and I was so eager to participate in the scientific activities of EFLM. In 2013, I was selected as the full member of EFLM Biological Variation Working Group (BV-WG). It was a fascinating scientific atmosphere and I was very lucky to be a part of this working group. My membership of BV-WG was also the beginning of my scientific activities in EFLM. In our first meetings we discussed the reliability and the quality of BV data in the literature and decided to initiate a new project for the data of BV of common measurands. Before this, the group decided to publish a checklist paper for the BV studies. The new project was the European Biological Variation Study (EuBIVAS); a multicenter study based in five European countries that collects samples following a stringent protocol. With the study, the group has updated the BV estimates for several measurands. In 2015 EFLM set up a new task group for the database of biological variation. The task group developed the Biological Variation Critical Appraisal Checklist (BIVAC) and prepared a database for the BV data of common measurands using BIVAC criteria and meta-analysis of the published data. Currently I am an expert consultant in BV-WG and member of the BV-Task group. We are very lucky because activities of the groups have been successfully coordinated by Aasna Aarsand and Sverre Sandberg.

In addition to BV-WG and BV-Task group I decided to start an initiative for the development of a practical way to calculate measurement uncertainty in medical laboratories. Since 2018 I am the chair of EFLM Measurement Uncertainty Task and Finish group. I think Measurement Uncertainty is the link between the medical and industrial metrology. The group members developed a very pragmatic and practical way for the calculation of Measurement Uncertainty for common analytes.

I am very happy to be part of EFLM working and task groups and working with Sverre Sandberg, Elvar Thedorsson, Wytze Oosterhuis, Aasne Aarsand, Pilar Fernandrz-Calle, Anna Carobene, Jorge Díaz-Garzon and other members of the groups.

What do you like most about EFLM?

I think the most important aspect of EFLM is that it is a very dynamic, productive and active laboratory medicine organization. EFLM working groups have made great

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?

Currently we are building a new house. We lived all our adult lives in an apartment. That helped to reduce household scores, and leave more time for professional and cultural activities. I was also blessed with a wife who took good care of the family. But now at retirement, we thought that a house with a garden would be good to keep us physically busy. Indeed, it does. I spend a lot of time constructing cabinets from scratch in the house. The small orchard it comes with also appears to take a lot of time. We'll see for how long we can keep up with it.

How would your spouse (wife, husband) describe you?

Better spend some more time with the family, going to the museum, a concert, a theatre performance, travelling together now we still can. That was till covid came along.

Are you good in time management?

I learned that if I don't take a task up immediately, it gets postponed for eternity. I also learned that many of the things you earmark for doing later just disappear without anybody ever asking again. The biggest challenge in time management is when you get all consumed by a big project, and the smaller yet relevant items get postponed.

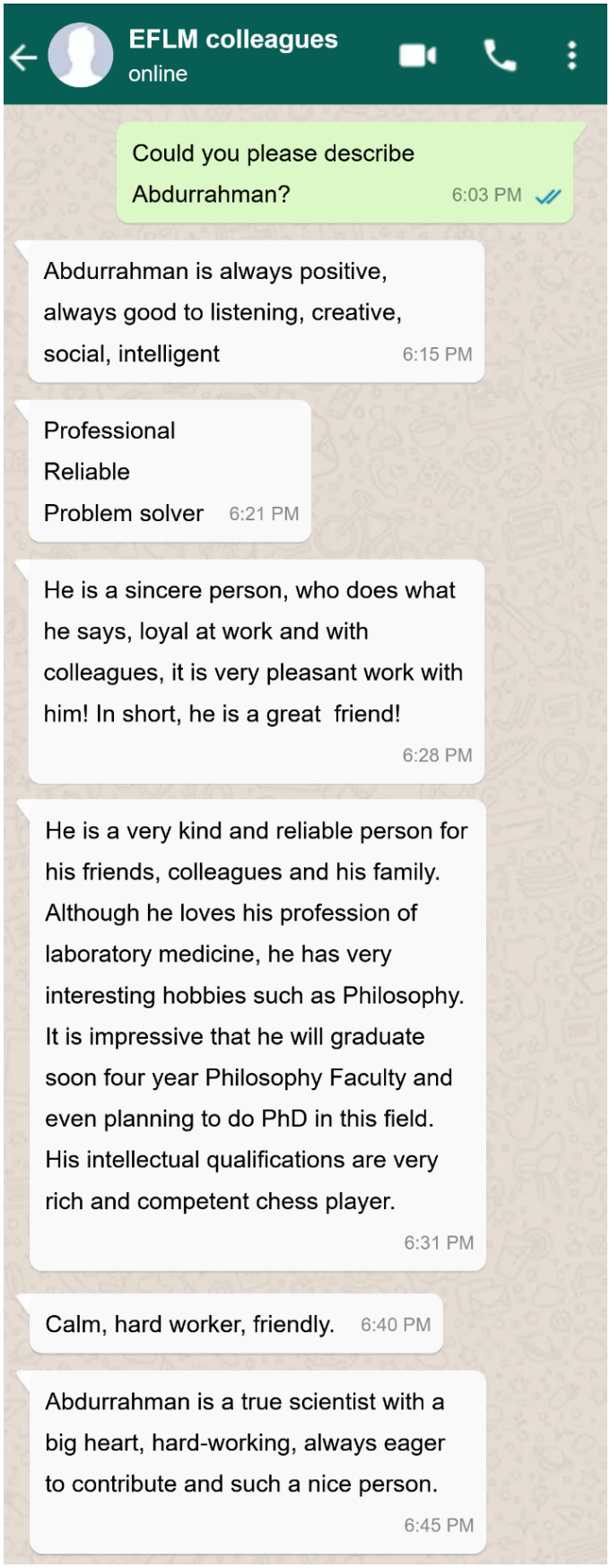
What do you value most about your country and its culture?

I like the central location of Belgium, close to France, England, Germany and their capitals. South of Leuven we have a relatively large forest. At the other side of the forest the people speak another language. We have so much to share, but what could have been a source of pride is lost due to deliberate neglect by politicians and media.

Do you have a pet? (feel free to share its photo with us, if you like)

No pet. As a young person used to have birds and fishes.

contributions to the development of our profession worldwide. Strategic conferences are one of the most important activities of EFLM. With these conferences EFLM opens new horizons for the medical laboratory specialists and also shapes the future of our profession. Additionally, EFLM Academy has become an important platform for disseminating scientific knowledge for medical laboratory specialists, harmonization and standardization for the education related to our profession.



How do you see EFLM in 10 years from today?

EFLM is a productive federation and made great contributions to the development of medical laboratories and also its activity shapes the future of the IVD industry. We are working for a better world, therefore sustainability and green-laboratories are important steps for the future of medical laboratories. With the development of IT technologies, storage and processing of big data became feasible for most laboratories. Laboratories are evolving to personalized laboratory medicine. EFLM will play a major role in these transformations.

What do you like about your current job?

My job is also my life. Laboratory medicine requires multidisciplinary approaches including basic biochemistry, the mechanism of diseases, molecular biology, biostatistics, metrology, engineering and mathematics etc.. Clinical biochemists should combine all these disciplines under an umbrella and I think mathematics is a strong bond combining all these disciplines and bringing them together. Personally I like to spend time with numbers, equations, mathematical theorems, statistical models and simulations. I believe that understanding variations is the key point in clinical biochemistry. Just as the solving of the wave structure of light made a great contribution to physics; similarly, understanding biological variation will make great contributions to laboratory medicine and particularly personalized laboratory medicine. Since 2020, I have been interested in personalized laboratory medicine. That's why clinical biochemistry is the perfect job for me and I feel very lucky to be a clinical biochemist.

Do you have a role model? If you do, what makes this person so special?

I have more than one role model. One of them is Linus Pauling who made great contributions to protein chemistry including the structure of alpha helix. He was not only interested in science but he was also a great peace activist. He was an extraordinary scientist and made groundbreaking contributions to science and peace. He received the Nobel prizes in both chemistry and peace. He dedicated his life for the happiness of mankind living on this unique planet in the universe.
Isaac Asimov has a great room in my life. He was a great popular science writer and also science fiction novelist. He wrote in all scientific disciplines from science history to molecular biology and to astrophysics. He published more than five hundred books and his great science fiction novel series 'Foundation' was awarded as "Best All-Time Series". Asimov had an extraordinary impact on my interest in science and science fiction.
Karl Popper, a great philosopher of science, impressed me deeply. After reading Popper's books I decided to study philosophy. I am very happy that this year I will graduate and I hope that I'll start the PhD program for philosophy of science. As stated by Socrates 'The unexamined life is not worth living'☺.

What are the qualities you appreciate most about people?

Responsibility, honesty, open mindedness and objectivity.

Do you have some hobbies? What are the things outside of your work that you are passionate about? How do you like to spend you free time?

I like walking, swimming and cycling. Science fiction, chess and philosophy are my hobbies. This year I will graduate from Istanbul University Department of Philosophy. Now I understand how philosophy shaped out civilization and I am grateful to the great philosophers. I am planning a PhD in the field of science philosophy. I am good at chess and play with my elder son when we are together. Queen's Gambit is one of my favorite series. In my free time, I usually watch science fiction series.

How would your spouse (wife, husband) describe you?

Responsible, patient and enduring, generous and merciful. I've been in love with her since we married in 1999. Our wedding date was a magic number: 09.09.1999 ☺☺.

What are your greatest challenges? Are you good in time management?

Unfortunately time management is my weak side. I love working not just because it's my job, but as a hobby. I cannot say that I work regularly only between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm. Usually I leave the office after 6.00 or 7.00 pm. And sometimes I bring work home. I hope my BV-WG friends will forgive me for not finishing the BV papers on time.

What do you value most about your country and its culture?

Turkey is a bridge between East and West. I am living in Istanbul and the city itself is a bridge between Asia and Europe. People living in Istanbul make intercontinental journeys every day☺. Istanbul is one of the most beautiful city in the world. As stated by Napoleon "If the world was only one country, Istanbul would be its capital!"
Anatolia and Mesopotamia are the cradle of civilization. Göbeklitepe is located in Şanlıurfa, a city in the southeast of Turkey and it is accepted as the beginning point of the history which goes back to 12.000 year BC.
I was born and grew up in Van. It is a very lovely city located in the east of Turkey and has a long history that goes back to the Urartian period. Tushpa (The old name of Van) was the capital city of Urartu (9th century BC) and since then it has been host to many civilizations.

Do you have a pet?

Unfortunately not. I like all animals very much but have no pet at home.

NEWS FROM EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS

Dr Per Hyltoft Petersen: An Appreciation

Reported by Callum G Fraser and Sverre Sandberg

Sadly, Dr Per Hyltoft Petersen from Odense in Denmark, passed away on 15 January 2022. Ever since the early 1980s, Dr Petersen was involved in investigations on how the analytical quality achieved affected clinical outcomes, and this continued throughout this professional life. In the 1990s, along with many others interested in this particular aspect of laboratory medicine, including Mogens Horder, Callum Fraser, Jim Westgard, Rainer Haeckel, Carmen Ricos, Sverre Sandberg, and many other internationally well-known collaborators, Dr Petersen continued his work on setting analytical goals and generating and applying data on the components of biological variation. Throughout this period, definition of what was then generally termed analytical goals was addressed by a

number of professional groups including the European Group on Evaluation of Laboratory Tests (EGE-Lab) and the European Exter Quality Assessment (EQA) Organisers Working Groups, of which Dr Petersen was a very active member. Much controversy grew about the appropriate means to set analytical goals and he, along with Drs Callum Fraser, Anders Kallner and Desmond Kenny organised the 1999 Stockholm Consensus Conference on Setting Global Analytical Quality Specifications in Laboratory Medicine, inviting all colleagues who had published on this topic to present (and publish) their views. The consensus achieved was a hierarchy of the known strategies for setting analytical quality specifications with the effect of performance on clinical decision-making as the best and the state-of-the-art achieved as the least advantageous. This hierarchy was based on the proposal advocated in an Editorial by Fraser and Petersen in Clinical Chemistry. The hierarchy was widely adopted throughout laboratory medicine. However, by the 2010s, it became clear that the hierarchy warranted review. In consequence the European Federation for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM) held the 1st Strategic Conference of the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in 2014. Dr Petersen was a member of the organising group, presented a summary of his work on analysis of the effect of analytical performance on clinical decision-making using his well-know and highly regarded graphical approaches, and participated in the preparation of the consensus statement, a simplification of the hierarchy established by the Stockholm Conference, a paper which has been cited more than 350 times already. Much interest was generated at the Strategic Conference on the assessment and uses of data on biological variation, a subject to which Dr Petersen had contributed much over his career. His inspiration has contributed to the impressive body of work done in the last decade by the EFLM groups concerned with biological variation, which have contributed so much to contemporary laboratory medicine. Since the Strategic Conference, Dr Petersen and colleagues from Scandinavia and Scotland have published a series of papers up to 2019 on the assessment of means to develop reference change values, another long-held interest of Dr Petersen to which he contributed significant insights. Although Dr Petersen was situated in Odense, for more than 20 years he was engaged in the work of the Norwegian organisation for quality improvement of laboratory examinations (Noklus) and worked as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Bergen. In NOKLUS he engaged, inspired, and supervised many PhD and MSc students and all looked forward to his visits in Bergen with anticipation. In addition to his publications, Dr Petersen was a captivating speaker and was invited to present his work at many conferences and meetings too countless to detail, but from every country in Scandinavia, through Milan, Antwerp, Padua, Jackson Hole: Colorado (at the invitation of the College of American Pathologists), Kobe: Japan (resulting in a book "Maintaining a Healthy State within the Individual"), Bratislava, Barcelona, Kuwait (giving a two-week course in selection and evaluation of analytical methods for the Ministry of Health, with Callum Fraser), and many others, including Australia. Together with Linda Thienpont, Dietmar Stöckl, Kristian Linnet and Sverre Sandberg, over many years, he toured around the world presenting a comprehensive course in medical statistics. A great scientist, innovator, and communicator, who contributed so much to the development of the numerical aspects of laboratory medicine. Per Hyltoft Petersen had great ambitions for the discipline: in contrast, his ambitions on his own behalf were small.

VACANCIES IN THE EFLM FUNCTIONAL UNITS

Vacancies in functional units under the EFLM Education & Training Committee

Reported by Silvia Cattaneo, EFLM Office

EFLM Full National Society Members are invited to send nominations for the following open positions:

- **WG "Congress & Postgraduate Education" (WG-CPE)**
  - 1 Full Member
- **WG "Distance Education & e-learning" (WG-DE)**
  - 1 Full Member
- **WG "Laboratory Medicine Credit Points" (WG-LMCP)**
  - 1 Full Member and 1 Young Scientist Full Member (≤ 35 years of age at the time of appointment)

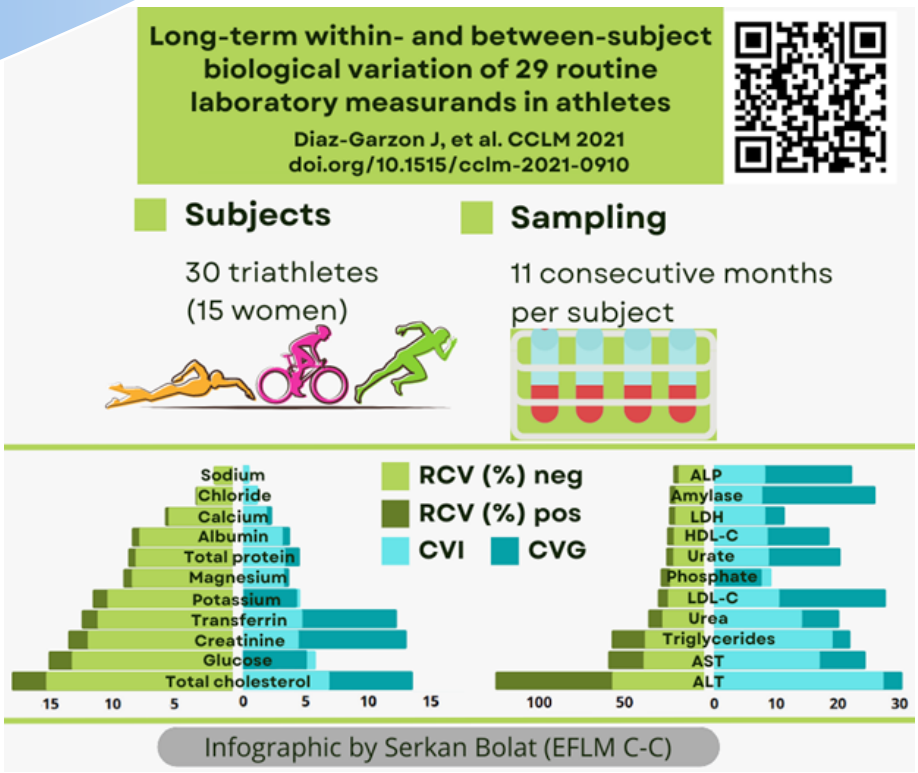
Click on the above positions to know more about the requirements and the evaluation's procedure.

The term of office will be for 2 years (Feb 2022 - Dec 2023). The position could be renewable for other two more terms if the work for the Group is deemed essential at that time. The work is mainly conducted by e-mail and teleconferencing, the WG usually meets once per year (COVID-19 permitting).

Procedure for applications: each EFLM National Society Member in good standing with the membership fee can submit one nomination using the form circulated to the National Society's representatives to be sent back to silvia.cattaneo@eflm.eu. A brief plan of the applicant's contribution to the aims and objectives of the relevant Working Group must be included in the form. Together with the application, a short CV should also be submitted underlining the qualifications and prior experience and publications in the relevant area. Candidates must be officially recommended by their National Society through a formal letter of support. Applicants who are not selected as full members may be eligible for corresponding membership.

Deadline to send nominations: **February 28, 2022.**

Long-term within- and between-subject biological variation of 29 routine laboratory measurands in athletes



Diaz-Garzon J, Fernandez-Calle P, Aarsand AK, Sandberg S, Coskun A, Carobene A, Jonker N, Itkonen O, Bartlett WA, Buno A, European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine Working Group on Biological Variation
Clin Chem Lab Med 2021;
Available from:
https://doi.org/10.1515/cclm-2021-0910

Reported by Serkan Bolat,
member of the EFLM WG-Promotion & Publications

UPCOMING EFLM EVENTS

EFLM Academy webinar: Patient-focused laboratory medicine – how can we communicate directly with patients?

On **February 08, 2022**, at **18:00 CET Dr. Snežana Jovičić (SR)** will hold a webinar with the title: **Patient-focused laboratory medicine – how can we communicate directly with patients?**

Together with the access to their personal health records, the patients are getting access to their laboratory test results. To better understand them they usually search the internet or consult various mobile apps, often finding unreliable, dubious or false information. Specialists of Laboratory Medicine could assist in patients' understanding of their condition by providing them personalized, understandable comments. Also, we may present numerate results in the way meaningful for patients (i.e. graphical presentation on numerical results in relation to thresholds for concerns and action). Through this direct communication we may also improve population awareness of laboratory medicine.

The webinar is accessible for EFLM Academy members only.

More information can be found in EFLM eLearning platform.

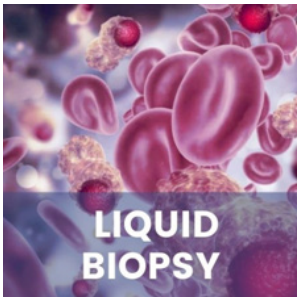
EFLM Academy webinar: Biological variation of CBC parameters as a pointer towards individual reference intervals

On **February 22, 2022,** at **18:00 CET Dr. Andrey Maynskiy (RU)** will hold a webinar with the title: **Biological variation of CBC parameters as a pointer towards individual reference intervals.**

The webinar is accessible for EFLM Academy members only.

More information can be found in EFLM eLearning platform.

EFLM Academy webinar: Liquid biopsy



On **March 29, 2022,** at **18:00 CET Dr. Evi S. Lianidou (GR)** will hold a webinar with the title: **Liquid biopsy.**

The webinar is accessible for EFLM Academy members only.

More information can be found in EFLM eLearning platform.

EFLM lessons in Immunochemistry

EFLM has the pleasure to announce a new EFLM educational activity for **EFLM Academy Members – EFLM lessons in immunochemistry.**

Each lesson will see the presence of a medical doctor presenting a specific disease and its diagnostic challenges; then Specialists in Laboratory Medicine will present the related immunochemistry markers for that specific disease focusing on analyticalaspects and pre/postanalytical issues.

Learning objestives are:

- to be able to analyse the diagnostic challenges of the disease;
- to learn about the laboratory and clinical aspects of the disease;
- to gain knowledge on the diagnostic and prognostic immunochemistry markers;
- to understand advantages and discrepancies of these markers interms of preanalytical,
  analytical and postanalytical aspects.

Lessons planed for 2022:

- **24 February 2022 - Lesson 1**
Hypertension: the role of laboratory in differential diagnosis
- **26 May 2022 - Lesson 2**
Vitamin D status: the role of laboratory
- **13 September 2022 - Lesson 3**
Heart Failure and NT-proBNP
- **24 November 2022 - Lesson 4**
Androgen excess or deficiency: the role of testosterone and free testosterone

More details in EFLM eLearning platform.

PAST EFLM EVENTS

EFLM Academy webinar: Why we are not using old and novel bone markers as a routine biochemical marker?

On **December 21, 2021**, at **18:00 Dr. Aylin Sepici Dinçel (TR)** held a webinar in which she presented old and novel bone turnover markers and their utility in assessing bone remodelling at the cellular level. Additionally, dr. Dinçel discussed the challenges in applying novel bone turnover markers in clinical practice, with special emphasis on harmonization and lack of clinical guidelines.

More information can be found in EFLM eLearning platform (accessible for EFLM Academy members only).

EFLM Academy webinar: Isolation, characterization and cryopreservation of hematopoietic stem cells from cord blood units

On **January 25, 2022**, at **18:00 Dr. Panagiotis Mallis (GR)** held a webinar in which he presented basic characteristics of umbilical cord blood (UCB) hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) and state-of-the-art modern UCB HSCs isolation, characterization and cryopreservation procedures. Moderator of the webinar was dr. Stathis Michalopoulos (GR).

More information can be found in EFLM eLearning platform (accessible for EFLM Academy members only).

3rd EFLM STRATEGIC CONFERENCE

SMART and GREEN LABORATORIES

How to implement IVDR, emerging technologies and sustainable practices in medical laboratories?

Virtual, 25-27 May 2022

After the successful previous two Strategic Conferences in Milan (2014) and Mannheim (2018), the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM), with great pleasure, officially announces and invites you to the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference "SMART and GREEN LABORATORIES -How to implement IVDR, emerging technologies and sustainable practices in medical laboratories?" to be held virtually in May 2022.

The EFLM Strategic Conference series aim to address and discuss recent developments and challenges in our field of profession, Laboratory Medicine. The general goal will focus on important aspects in Laboratory Medicine in which some strategic actions/measures should be taken. The conference program has been tailored by the scientific advisory committee consisting of all the stakeholders in the field of laboratory medicine. Their feedback has guided us in the selection of the topics of this one. Global leaders and participants from laboratory medicine, diagnostics, digital health, medical devices, and representatives from MedTech Europe will join the conference to deliver the latest innovations in laboratory medicine, partnership model for efficient integration and adoption of emerging technologies, preparation for the new IVDR, switching to Green Labs, trends, opportunities, and challenges, they are facing. A panel of experts will discuss what is needed to succeed in this changing environment and the role of collaborations between industry, public, private, and academic drivers of innovation. Their feedback, participation, and engagement during the open discussion platform at the Strategic Conference will be important and taken into consideration to steer laboratory medicine forward and to shape the future of our profession.

Strategic Conference is not just about gaining knowledge from scientific sessions. Our aim is to have an interactive program, which will allow opportunities to interact, share and learn from all involved stakeholders.

VIRTUAL

6th EFLM CONFERENCE ON PREANALYTICAL PHASE

15-18 MARCH 2022

Preanalytical Quality
an interdisciplinary journey

http://www.preanalytical-phase.org/

With great pleasure, we invite you to the **6th EFLM Preanalytical Phase Conference** to be held virtual on 15-18 March 2022. Previous Conferences have been successfully organized biannually with delegate numbers rising over the years (the last Conference in Zagreb had 640 delegates). Due to the COVID pandemic, the 2021 conference had to be rescheduled and will now be held purely online. On one hand this is maybe not quite as charming as a face to face conference, on the other hand we now have no limitation as to the number of delegates. The focus of this year's conference is the importance of interdisciplinary collaborations among laboratories, clinics and physicians, in order to improve the quality of the preanalytical phase within the total laboratory testing process. The Conference Scientific program has been tailored by the most renowned experts from Europe in the field to deliver up-to-date knowledge. It is the unique and maybe only opportunity to advert to an audience interested in preanalytical topics on such a large basis, as the EFLM Preanalytical Phase Conference is the largest such conference in the world.

MZ CONGRESSI

For information please contact the Organising Secretariat at MZ Congressi:
for the 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference: Ms Patrizia Sirtori @ patrizia.sirtori@mzcongressi.com
for the 6th EFLM Preanalytical Conference: Ms Barbara Zorzi @ barbara.zorzi@mzcongressi.com

CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN THE EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Reported by Silvia Cattaneo, EFLM Office

A warm welcome to the new incoming National Society officers and a great thank you to the outgoing EFLM National Representatives and National Society Presidents for the support to EFLM activities during their terms of office.

SIBioC - Laboratory Medicine (The Italian Society of Clinical Biochemistry and Clinical Molecular Biology)

Dr. Tommaso Trenti (Diagnostic Hematology and Clinical Genomics Laboratory, Dept of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, AUSL/AOU Modena) is the new President of SIBioC replacing Dr. Laura Sciacovelli. Currently, Dr. Trenti is also covering the position of the National Representative replacing Prof. Giuseppe Lippi.

Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine SEQC^{ML}

Dr. Antonio Buño Soto (Laboratory Medicine Dept, University Hospital La Paz, Madrid) is the new President of SEQC^{ML} replacing Dr. Imma Caballé. While Dr. Merce Ibarz Escuer (Laboratory Dept, Arnau de Vilanova University Hospital, Lleida) is the EFLM National Society's Representative replacing the position covered by Dr. Buño Soto.

NEWS FROM EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

News from the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

Reported by Prof. Nada Makić-Singh, Executive Director of the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš«

Appreciating the work of their teacher and a renowned expert Professor Dr Ivan Berkeš, the Society of Medical Biochemists of Yugoslavia (now the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia) and the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade, created the Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš« in 1997 and established the »Annual Scientific Conference« dedicated to the life and work of Professor Ivan Berkeš. The scientific foundation was established on the proposal of the Professor Dr Nada Majkić-Singh, also a long-term organizer of the Annual Scientific Conferences. Beginning in 1998, Scientific Conferences have been presenting masters and doctoral theses of members of the Society and related disciplines during the previous year.

On November 16th, 2010, the Thirteenth Annual Scientific Conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Professor Ivan Berkeš was held in Belgrade, during which experts from Belgrade (N. Majkić-Singh), Zagreb (S. Margetić) and Skopje (S. Efremova-Aaron), the cities where Professor Ivan Berkeš lived and worked, gave their lectures. Also, diplomas and money awards were traditionally presented by the Scientific Fund »Dr Ivan Berkeš« to the best students of the Faculty of Pharmacy in Belgrade: Zora Ćetković and Jelena Joksić.

The purpose of the Scientific Foundation is to award monetary awards and diplomas to the best graduates of the Faculty of Pharmacy in the previous year, of both study profiles (graduate pharmacist-medical biochemist and graduate pharmacist; now: master of pharmacy-medical biochemist and master of pharmacy), who were the quickest to graduate and with the highest average grade. So far, twenty-two Scientific Annual Conferences have been held, with fifty laureates of the Fund who were awarded diplomas and monetary awards, with their biographies presented in the Monograph. In 2020, the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia marked the 110th anniversary of the birth of Professor Ivan Berkeš, on which occasion the Monograph - LIFE AND WORK OF PROFESSOR IVAN BERKEŠ and FOUNDATION LAUREATES were prepared: WHERE ARE THEY AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING TODAY?

Laureats of the Scientific Foundation Professor Ivan Berkeš in 2021

Awards from the Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš« in 2021 were awarded to the best students of Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade graduated in the school year 2020/2021. This year recipients were:

SUZANA SAVIĆ
(Master of Pharmacy-Medical Biochemists)
and
ANDREA ATANASOV
(Master of Pharmacy)

The awards delivered Professor Nada Majkić- Singh and Professor Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević on behalf of Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Beograde during III KONGRES TIMA MEDICINSKIH BIOHEMIČARA (TMB-BPSA) on November 7th at the Pharmaceutical Faculty, University of Belgrade.

On this occasion, the Society of Medical Biochemists congratulates them once again on their achievements in the field of medical biochemistry and pharmacy.

Suzana Savić, born on 13.03.1997. in Loznica. She went to the elementary school in her hometown Mali Zvornik and finished it as a student of the generation. In the same town, in 2016, she finished high school. Same year she started her studies in the Faculty of Pharmacy in Belgrade (Master of pharmacy – medical biochemist), and graduated in June of 2021. She received »Professor Dr Ivan Berkeš« award as the best student of the class 2020/2021. During her studies, she got annual award of the Faculty of Pharmacy for the best students, three times in a row. Also Suzana Savić, during her studies, was engaged in student scientific research at Department of Medical Biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Belgrade under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Zeljković. She participated in XIII Mini-Congress of Students at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Belgrade in 2021, where she presented a student scientific research paper on the topic "The effect of monacolin K administration on efficiency of the cholesterol synthesis and absorption", which was named the best work in the field of medical biochemistry.

Andrea Atanasov was born on 15th December 1997 in Belgrade. She finished elementary school and The IX Gymnasium»Mihailo Petrović Alas« – natural sciences and mathematics, in Belgrade. She enrolled at the University of Belgrade – Faculty of Pharmacy in 2016, and graduated in September 2021 with an average grade of 9.75. She defended her graduate thesis entitled »CYP2C19 phenotype of homozygous and hemizygous transgenic mice on the eighteenth day of embryonic development« at the Department of Physiology. During high school, she attended Chemistry program at the »Petnica« Research Station. She received award for the best graduated student (Pharmacy programme) during 2020/2021 at the University of Belgrade-Faculty of Pharmacy from the Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš«. During her studies, she was awarded for her success by the Faculty of Pharmacy for several years. She is a scholarship holder of the Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia – Dositeja. During her studies, she was a scholar of the City of Belgrade and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia. She participated in the XIV Mini-Congress of Students of the Faculty of Pharmacy as the author of student research work. She enrolled in doctoral academic studies at the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Belgrade in the 2021/2022 school year under the supervisor of Assist. Prof. Marin Jukić. Since October 2021, she has been working as a Graduate Researcher at the Faculty of Pharmacy.

Professor Nada Majkić-Singh and Professor Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević address to the participants of the III TMBP-BPSA kongres, November 7, 2021, Pharmaceutical Faculty, Belgrade.

Suzana Savić, the winner of the Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan Berkeš« with Nada Majkić-Singh and Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević.

Andrea Atanasov, the winner of the Scientific Foundation »Professor Ivan

Berkeš« with Nada Majkić-Singh and Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević.

From left to right: Suzana Savić, Nada Majkić-Singh, Teodora Tumbas

(TMB-BPSA Coordinator), Nataša Bogavac-Stanojević and Andrea Atanasov, Novembar 7, 2021, Pharmaceutical Faculty, Belgrade.

32nd Symposium of the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Reported by Petra Filipi, University Hospital Centre Split, member of the Organizing Committee

Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CSMBLM), in collaboration with University Hospital Centre Split, organized an annual Symposium covering currently the most interesting topic in clinical chemistry - laboratory medicine in pandemic of COVID 19. This year, as well as last year, due to ongoing pandemic and restrictions, Symposium was virtual, organized on the Zoom platform. The Symposium consisted of 8 lectures which were presented by Doctor of Medicine (MD) and specialists in laboratory medicine (LM). After an introductory lecture held by Ivo Ivić, MD, with title 'COVID-19 is much more than an acute respiratory disease', Žana Rubić, MD, talked about point-of-care tests for detecting SARS-CoV-2 infection. Branka Krešić, LM, discussed about changes in the morphology of peripheral blood cells and Leida Tandara, LM, reported about changes in iron metabolism in SARS-CoV-2 infection. Petra Filipi, LM, explained why interleukin 6 can be used as prognostic factor in the severity of Covid-19 disease. Daniela Šupe-Domić, LM talked about growth differentiation factor 15 in patients hospitalized due to COVID-19. Sanda Stojanović-Stipić, MD, had a case report of patient in ICU with Guillain-Barre syndrome after COVID-19. Marijan Tandara, LM, explained possible influence of COVID-19 on fertility and assisted reproduction.

The abstracts of the lectures will be available in the December issue of Biochemia Medica journal. The Symposium was attended by 163 participants from Croatia.

We thank all the participants for their interest in the Symposium and all the lecturers who contributed to its success.

Importance of automated screening methods to detect malnutrition

Dysphagia, neurological diseases, oncological pathologies, diabetes and cardiovascular disease are the clinical situations that are most associated with in-hospital malnutrition. In addition, the prevalence of this condition in polymedicated patients is twice that in non-polymedicated patients, according to data from the PREDyCES study (Prevalence of Hospital Malnutrition and Associated Costs in Spain) which evaluated 1,597 patients from 31 representative hospitals of the National Health System. The highest prevalence of malnutrition, both when the patient is admitted to the hospital and at discharge, is concentrated in the age group over 80 years of age. Indeed, one of the symposia of the XV National Clinical Laboratory Congress (LabClin 2021) dealt with the contributions of the clinical laboratory to in-hospital malnutrition.

This congress was held in virtual format from November 7 to 13 and was organized by the three national clinical laboratory societies, the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQC^{ML}), the Spanish Association of Medical Biopathology-Laboratory Medicine (AEBM -ML) and the Spanish Clinical Laboratory Association (AEFA).

The main consequences of malnutrition associated with the disease are: increased morbidity; increased hospital stay, which leads to increased hospital costs; increased mortality and readmissions; and poorer response to medical and surgical therapies, according to Dr. José Ruiz Budría, specialist in Clinical Biochemistry at the Lozano Blesa University Clinical Hospital (Zaragoza) and member of the SEQC^{ML} Nutrition and Vitamins Commission. In addition, he pointed out that malnutrition associated with the disease includes any deficiency, be it a cause or consequence of the disease, therapeutic procedures, hospitalization, or complications. Now, it would be more correct to speak of clinical malnutrition, since with this concept we understand that nutritional monitoring must be carried out throughout the disease process, whether it occurs in a hospital setting or in primary care.

He also remarked that according to the recommendations of the multidisciplinary consensus document on the approach to in-hospital malnutrition in Spain, some screening method should be carried out to detect malnutrition early in the first 24-48 hours. To do this, each centre should use the most feasible screening method available. There are clinical, automated and mixed screening methods. Clinical methods include subjective and objective data (weight, height, weight changes, etc.). Automated screening methods are based on analytical methods, but also capture other useful data for screening available in the databases of the hospital computer system.
In addition, Dr. Ruiz Budría explains that, of the existing screening methods for adults, the most used are the MNA (Mini Nutritional Assessment), MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool), NRS-2002 (Nutritional Risk Screening 2002), and the SGA (Subjective Global Assessment) -- all of them being clinical screening methods. As to automatic methods, the most widely used is the CONUT (Controlling Nutritional Status), which is based in a first phase on three analytical factors (albumin, cholesterol, and total lymphocytes), which are usually requested in most of the analytical requests upon admission of the patient.
Specifically, the Clinical Biochemistry specialist emphasized that the PREDyCES study concluded that the prevalence of in-hospital malnutrition observed according to the NRS-2002 was 23.7%, reaching values of 37% in patients older than 70 years and up to 45% in those over 85 years of age. The highest prevalence was found in patients with neoplastic, respiratory, and cardiovascular diseases.

Implementation of screening for malnutrition associated with disease in Spain

Dr. Ruiz Budría affirmed that at present, most of the hospitals in our country have established screening protocols for clinical malnutrition following the recommendations of the European Society of Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN) using clinical methods (MUST and NRS-2002), although the implementation of automatic methods is increasing.
Likewise, the speaker stressed that the role of clinical laboratory professionals is to implement the CONUT automatic screening method or one of the other existing ones, such as FILNUT (Filter Phase Nutritional Analysis), to identify patients with moderate or severe risk of malnutrition and, with this, alert the clinical professional to take the appropriate nutritional measures in each case.
Finally, Dr. Ruiz Budría noted that the SEQC^{ML} Nutrition and Vitamins Commission has held courses and symposia in past congresses, most recently one related to the approach to clinical malnutrition from the point of view of the laboratory. In addition, the SEQC^{ML} has a close relationship with the various scientific societies for the joint preparation of documents and recommendations.
Likewise, in LabClin 2021 a nutritional risk calculator (according to CONUT) was presented, which is available on the SEQC^{ML} page in the section on the Nutrition and Vitamins Commission.

For more information: www.seqc.es

IFCC NEWS

IFCC President Message – January 2022

Happy New Year to everyone in the IFCC family! Moving into 2022, the IFCC is eager to continue its mission of "advancing excellence in laboratory medicine for better healthcare worldwide". Several major events are planned this year by IFCC including the EuroMedLab conference in Munich in early April, the WorldLab Congress in Seoul in June, and the IFCC General Conference in Brussels in October. I am optimistic that we will be able to come together again and hold successful in person/hybrid events as pandemic restrictions are likely to ease in many parts of the world after Spring.
Now that the framework for several new initiatives has been built (and the new taskforces are already active), we will be taking a fresh look at divisional activities and planning for the future. To this end, IFCC Division Chairs will come together with the IFCC Executive Board soon for an in person/hybrid IFCC Strategic Meeting to discuss divisional structure and strategic planning. A key goal is to carefully evaluate each functional group (committees, working groups, taskforces), reviewing their mandate and progress to-date. Ensuring that the IFCC structure is appropriately positioned to meet its scientific, educational, and global responsibilities over the coming years.
IFCC has also launched a new important initiative, the **IFCC Global Lab Medicine Week (GLMW)**, to celebrate the pivotal role of laboratory medicine and laboratory professionals in both public health and patient care. The 2022 focus/theme will be "The Laboratory's Vital Role in the Global Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic". A **Global Lab Week Working Group** has been formed with representations from IFCC regional federations and they are hard at work planning the official launch of this program in April of this year during the EuroMedLab Congress in Munich. For this initiative, IFCC would like to collaborate closely with regional federations, national societies, and corporate members to support its activities around the world. To this end, calls for nominations have been circulated for **1) IFCC Corporate Member Representatives** to serve on a Corporate Member Advisory Group to the Global Lab Week and **2) National Lab Week Champions** to assist with the promotion of GLMW and the vital role our profession plays in their country/region.
In other news, IFCC has been working to create a request for proposals to identify a new IT partner to redevelop/upgrade the current **IFCC website** and associated platforms as well as provide ongoing technical and operational support. In an increasingly virtual world, it is more important than ever to further establish and improve IFCC's online presence, increasing engagement, knowledge translation, satisfaction, and so much more within the IFCC community and beyond. This will be particularly useful to support initiatives such as GLMW, eAcademy, Global Reference Interval Database (GRID), Global Lab Quality (GLQ), and others. We are also planning the development of an **IFCC Virtual Platform** for all future virtual and hybrid events, both smaller meeting and larger conferences. Stay tuned!
As always, please feel free to email me at president@ifcc.org with any feedback, questions, or concerns you may have.
Till next time☺
Khosrow

Calendar of EFLM events and events under EFLM auspices

Do not miss the opportunity to have your event listed here.
Apply for EFLM auspices! For more information visit here or email eflm@eflm.eu
Due to COVID-19 alert throughout the world, some upcoming events could have been cancelled or postponed, please direct check with the organizers if the date is confirmed.

8 February 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Patient-focused laboratory medicine - how can we communicate directly with patients?**
on-line Click here for information

22 February 2022
EFLM Webinar: Biological variation of CBC parameters as a pointer towards individual reference intervals
on-line Click here for information

24 February 2022
EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry: **Lesson n. 1 Hypertension: the role of laboratory in differential diagnosis**
on-line Click here for information

15-18 March 2022
6th EFLM Conference on Preanalytical Phase "Preanalytical Quality: an interdisciplinary journey"
on-line Click here for information

29 March 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Liquid biopsy**
on-line Click here for information

10-14 April 2022
EuroMedLab 2021 - 24th IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
Munich (DE) Click here for information

12 April 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Evidence-based laboratory medicine**
on-line Click here for information

20-21 April 2022
Labquality Days 2022: International Congress on Quality in Laboratory Medicine 2022
Helsinki (F) Click here for information

26 April 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Laboratory diagnostic of thyroid diseases**
on-line Click here for information

10 May 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Regulation of In Vitro Diagnostics in the EU: Lessons for diagnostic professionals**
on-line Click here for information

23-26 May 2022
The 10th Santorini Conference "Systems medicine and personalised health & therapy" - The odyssey from hope to practice: Patient first - Keeps Ithaca always in your mind
Santorini (GR) Click here for information

24 May 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Laboratory diagnostic of prostate cancer**
on-line Click here for information

26 May 2022
EFLM Lessons in Immunochemistry: **Lesson n. 2 Vitamin D status: the role of laboratory**
on-line Click here for information

25-27 May 2022
3rd EFLM Strategic Conference: SMART and GREEN LABORATORIES - How to implement IVDR, emerging technologies and sustainable practices in medical laboratories?
on-line Click here for information

21 June 2022
EFLM Webinar: **Molecular Immunology: new tricks of the innate immune system**
on-line Click here for information

28 June 2022
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