

EuroLabNews

THE EFLM BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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



In memory of Professor Victor Blaton

By Ana-Maria Simundic
on behalf of the EFLM Executive Board

Vic Blaton is not with us anymore. This sad event is an enormous bereavement for our profession. For sure many of our colleagues throughout Europe, who had the privilege of knowing him, join us in expressing condolences to his family and our friends in the Belgian Society.

Vic was a pioneer of our profession in so many aspects, a wise leader with a vision, a warm and intellectual person, a lovely gentleman, a friend and a person with a big heart. Vic dedicated his life to the profession. He was a leader in the development of laboratory medicine in Europe and beyond. One of his biggest achievements was the merger of FESCC and EC4 into EFCC (currently known as EFLM). He was its first President (2008-2007). He was especially committed to help and support the non-developed and developing countries in Europe to reach professional and educational standards of the Western countries in the European Community at times of big political and economic changes. He was a true European, a kind Grandfather figure in our profession. His wisdom, warm friendship and smile will be sadly missed.



to be continued on page 2

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Foreword

by Harjit Pal Bhattoa, EFLM Newsletter Editor

In this current issue of the EFLM EuroLabNews prominent dignitaries pay their respects to Professor Vic Blaton who demised in February, 2017. The nominations for the EFLM Executive Board 2018-2019 have been finalized and the elections are to be held at the EFLM General Meeting in Athens this June. The EFLM Annual Report 2016, highlighting all activities, is presented by the EFLM Executive Board Secretary, Ana-Maria Simundic. Giuseppe Lippi, in the regular section of Laboratory Hot Topics, enumerates on the Cost and Value of Laboratory Medicine. The constitution and the aims of the newly set up EFLM working group (WG) "Register" are presented. Vacancies in this and other WG may be of interest to enthusiastic EFLM members eager to forward the mission of the EFLM. Applicants may mark their calendars to apply for the prestigious EFLM-Abbott and EFLM-HyTest awards, the deadline for both is the 20th of April, 2017. CCLM has been a reliable medium for dispersion of knowledge, and the renewal of the free subscription agreement between EFLM and the Publishers is good news for all EFLM members. Participants at the EuroMedLab Athens 2017 shall be able to attend quite a few state-of-the-art Symposia, the overview of the different sessions is presented. A summary of the well-placed 4th EFLM-BD European Conference on Preanalytical Phase held in March gives us a grasp on the importance of the topic. MariaStella Graziani, Chair of the EFLM Communications Committee presents the update of the EFLM publications list. It is always a pleasure to announce the recipients of the EFLM bursary program for the EuroMedLab 2017 Athens Conference, congratulations. As a regular column of the EuroLabNews, changing of the guard and other important news from National Societies have also made this second issue more colourful.

The EFLM Newsletter is published bi-monthly

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By Michel Langlois
AZ Sint-Jan Brugge-Oostende,
Brugge, Belgium

Vic Blaton was born October 7, 1937 in Belgium. He was married to Dina Vandenbroeke and father of five children – Stefan, Sofie, Sylvie, Benedicte, Filip – and 10 grandchildren. He was trained in science and biochemistry at the KU-Leuven (Catholic University Leuven). As a PhD he was a postdoctoral fellow at the same University. He followed the postgraduate training to become a clinical biologist in 1973, recognized for laboratory medicine.

In 1970, he became director of the Simon Stevin Institute for Scientific Research in Brugge, Belgium. He was working on fundamental and clinical research of lipoproteins in atherosclerosis and cardiovascular diseases, especially on the protective role of high density lipoproteins (HDL) in inflammatory processes of atherosclerosis. Lipidology was his passion, and cardiac prevention became his mission. His main interest was the comparative study of biochemistry in non-human species (primates) in order to find models for studying atherosclerosis development in humans. In 1977 he was installed as staff member – clinical biologist – in the department of Clinical Chemistry at the AZ St.-Jan Hospital

in Brugge and became director of the same laboratory in 1997. His activities resulted in many publications in top scientific journals and in PhD theses of his co-workers. He was founder and President (1996-2000) of the Belgian Lipid Club, a prestigious club of scientists aiming to promote recommendations and treatments for the prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

He became Professor in Medical Biochemistry at the University of Leuven in 1982, and he was nominated as Lecturer and Visiting Professor at the North-Western University Medical School in Chicago, Illinois (1989). He presented and organised many courses and International meetings, such as the European Atherosclerosis Society (EAS) Congress in Brugge in 1998. He was nominated in 1982 as NATO expert – scientific adviser for the prevention of myocardial infarctions in soldiers and in 1992 he obtained the NATO-Award for Sciences. He obtained many other prestigious awards, most recently the EFLM-Roche Award in 2013.

Vic was a leader with a vision and strong pro-European mission. When he was President of the Belgian Society of Clinical Chemistry in 1988-1993, he initiated and participated in the creation of FESCC and EC4. He believed that the creation of a true operational structure is essential for the European harmonization in education and training of the professionals and the laboratory practice guidelines. He became president of FESCC (Forum European Societies in Clin Chem) in 2000 for a first term and in 2003 for a second term. He was able to merge together the two



organisations FESCC and EC4 in one new European branch of IFCC, named EFCC – the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine – in 2007. As first President of EFCC (EFLM) in 2007-2009 and also thereafter, he stimulated the professional integration of countries of the Balkan region in Europe.

Vic was a figurehead, a kind of father figure in times of major political and economic changes in Europe, and not only for our profession. In his career he took part in different activities and founded projects to support the developing countries in Africa and South-America. This illustrates his good heart and engagement for healthcare and socio-economic welfare, more than laboratory medicine.

Vic will be remembered as a smiling man who always wanted the best for everyone. We will miss his friendship, his advice, his stimulating force, his enthusiasm. We will keep the many beautiful moments with Vic alive in our memory.

By Gerard Sanders and Rob Jansen, former EC4 Presidents

With the death of Vic Blaton on February 16th at the age of 79 years, clinical chemistry in Europe lost a good friend and colleague who helped to give our profession its current shape. With the start of the European Union in the 50s of the last century and its gradual extension in the years to follow, it became clear that harmonization of our profession would be an important issue. Many discussions followed and in the late 80s Vic became the Belgian representative in these consultations. In these deliberations that, *inter alia*, took place in The Hague, Echternach, Pont-a-Mousson and Paris, the contribution of Vic was greatly appreciated.

From that starting point, it became clear that there should be a European association for clinical chemistry to cover all facets of the field. First, EC4 found its place in the EU and FESCC was created for Europe as a whole.

In EC4 Vic was in 1989, 1990 and 1991 one of the initiators of the so-called European Syllabus to describe the contents of our profession as a prelude to a European directive for our professional domain. In the late 90's he contributed to the publication of the 'essential criteria for quality systems in medical laboratories' which became the first version of ISO 15189, nowadays the worldwide standard for quality of medical laboratories.

In 2005 it became clear that the two organizations should merge and Vic as President of FESCC at that time contributed to the steps necessary for the merger to form the new organization and thus became one of the founding fathers of EFLM.





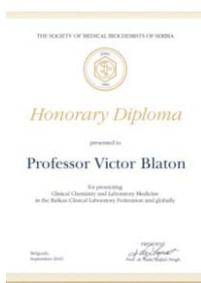
By Nada Majkic-Singh, Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

Upon learning the sad news of the passing of professor Victor Blaton, the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia feels obliged to remember our many years of scientific and expert collaboration and personal friendship with him. Professor Victor Blaton first came to Belgrade as the president of FESCC in June 2005, to join the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Society

of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and Montenegro. On this occasion, the First Symposium for Balkan Region was held, entitled "Education, Management and Standards in Laboratory Medicine", which, as the president of the FESCC, professor Blaton wholeheartedly supported and even asked for such symposia to be regularly organized. The tradition of holding this Symposium has lasted to this day. Professor Blaton was a coordinator, teacher and participant of practically every Symposium held. As the President of FESCC, he promoted the importance and goals of this European organization, bringing it closer to our medical biochemists. Professor Blaton was also a welcome guest and teacher at our national congresses, as well as the Congresses of the Balkan Federation, of which four were organized in Serbia with great success. For his contribution to the promotion of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine in our country, the Balkan region and globally, the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia presented professor Blaton with the highest reward of the Society, our Honorary Diploma.

Professor Blaton last stayed in Belgrade in May 2015, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and the 12th EFLM Symposium for Balkan region. Professor Blaton truly wanted to get to know the way of life, the customs and the people of Serbia and the Balkans, and I will never forget his desire to learn about the wines that can be found in Serbia. I knew he was a wine connoisseur, but once he confused me with a question: how to obtain the wine called "Probus" from Fruska Gora? I had never heard about this brand of wine, however, upon my request, some colleagues soon brought two bottles of this rare wine that he took to Belgium. They are probably still in his collection. The last time we met was in October of last year in Tirana, at the Congress of the Balkan Federation of Laboratory Medicine. We were all very happy to see each other again and evoke memories of previous meetings and events.

All of us who loved and valued him had a hard time hearing about his sudden death, so in this way we would also like to pay our respects and express our condolences to his great family.



By Elizabeta Topic, former Chair of the EFLM Education and Training Committee

I first met Professor Blaton in the late eighties, at the Conference on Lipid and Atherosclerosis in Bruges, then in 1993 at the 10th European Congress of Clinical Chemists in Nice, where FESCC was formed. I worked with him in FESCC, EFCC and EFLM in the Committee of Education and Training (C-ET). Prof. Blaton was a leader with a vision and supported any activities contributing to the profession in the European Society; he was a person with whom it was very easy to find a common ground and collaborate in pleasant atmosphere.

In 2000, Prof. Blaton and I started to settle a project with basic plan for continuing professional education in clinical chemistry. This project was launched in 2001 in cooperation with the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CSMBLM) and Slovenian Association of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (SACCLM). Over these more than 15 years, the C-ET has provided attractive continuous education and training programs that were heterogeneous and diverse enough to meet the individual educational needs in the course of continuing professional development. The common title of EFLM, former FESCC, courses was New Classification, Diagnosis and Treatment, each of them dedicated to a particular medical discipline.

These Courses, known as Dubrovnik Courses, were affiliated with the programs of the Interuniversity Centre Dubrovnik. Professor Blaton always managed to allocate some of his precious time to take part in each of the Courses, and as a wise European leader he gave an opportunity to about 1000 participants attending these Courses and listening to some 100 invited speakers from all over Europe to have friendly discussions with him. In this way he learned about the situation or the possible problems in the profession in particular countries. It was an opportunity for him to meet professionals and get informal information from almost all European countries. He was always ready to listen and always ready to help.

Prof. Blaton was my very good friend and true friend of the Croatian Society and of all European Societies alike. He was a nice gentleman and a person with great heart. All of us having a privilege to know him and work with him will miss his wisdom, smile and kind-heartedness.

By Evgenija Homšak, Past President of the Slovenian Association for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

In the name of Slovenian Association for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (SZKKLM) I would like to express our deep sympathy and sadness at lost of our good friend and honored member of SZKKLM.

During his fruitful professional life, especially under his FESCC presidency, together with his motivation and positive attitude, SZKKLM has started and worked on several important FESCC projects and established EFLM conferences like Alpe-Adria, EFLM postgraduate Courses, that were held for several years in Dubrovnik, conferences on quality and accreditation in clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine.

We were always happy and honoured to host him at our several national congresses and professional meetings. His presence as the professional and great warm person was always precious, that gave to our meetings a great added value.

We would also like to express our sincere condolences to his close friends and family.

Prof. Victor Blaton will stay in our deep precious memories.

By Claudia Pronk-Admiraal, President of the Netherlands Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine on behalf of the Dutch Clinical Chemistry community

We are so sorry to hear the news that Vic Blaton has left us forever. What a remarkable man he was, patiently piecing the European Clinical Chemistry community together in what finally EFLM is nowadays. It was a privilege to have worked with him and to have known him.

We wish you all the courage to continue in his footsteps.





THE EFLM EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMS

Nominations for the EFLM Executive Board 2018-2019

In reply to call for nominations for the election of the EFLM Executive Board 2018-2019, this is to inform you about the nominations that were received from EFLM National Societies.

Position as "President-Elect"	Ana-Maria Simundic (Croatia)
Position as "Executive Board Secretary"	Giuseppe Lippi (Italy)
Position as "Treasurer"	Huibert Storm (The Netherlands)
Positions as "Member-at-Large" (two positions available)	Tiago Guimarães (Portugal) Michel Langlois (Belgium) Grazyna Sypniewska (Poland) Tomas Zima (Czech Rep)

Elections will be held at the next EFLM General Meeting in Athens (GR) on Sunday 11 June 2017 (h. 14.00-18.15) on the occasion of the 22nd IFCC-EFLM EuroMedLab Congress.

Detailed information about each candidate will be sent to all EFLM National Representatives and National Society Presidents within the end of April.

For any further information, please contact Ms Silvia Cattaneo at the EFLM Office, at silvia.cattaneo@eflm.eu

EFLM Annual Report 2016

by Ana-Maria Simundic, EFLM Executive Board Secretary

General Meeting

EFLM held its ninth General Meeting in conjunction with the IFCC General Conference on 21 March 2016 in Madrid, Spain, where 31 out of 40 EFLM Member Societies (NS), were represented. During the GM EFLM President, Mauro Panteghini (MP), gave a report of the recent EFLM activities since the last GM held in Paris. Also, in the absence of EFLM Treasurer (Huib Storm) MP gave a financial report (i.e. balance sheet report for 2015, internal budget report for 2015 and internal budget plan for 2016). EFLM GM approved the balance sheet for 2015 and the internal budget report for 2015 and plan for 2016.

During the GM elections were held for EFLM President and Vice President. GM has unanimously confirmed the position of Mr. Sverre

Sandberg, as the next EFLM President and his term of office 2016-2017. There were two candidates for Vice President: Mr. Damien GRUSON (Belgium) and Mr. Michael NEUMAIER (Germany). Michael NEUMAIER was confirmed by the majority (16/31) of the GM members as the EFLM Vice-President for the 2016-2018.

EFLM EB had already discussed rules for the election of the Regional Federation Representatives to the IFCC Executive Board on several occasions. EFLM EB strongly supports that an individual representing a Region is selected by a Region according to the Region agreed electoral process and that this person participates in the policies and actions of a Region. If a separate election is organized by IFCC to elect a "regional representative" in their EB, EFLM EB thinks that there will not be any structural connection between the Regional Federation (e.g., EFLM) and IFCC. To overcome this situation, MP presented a proposal for the Election Procedure for European Region in which 1) the EFLM EB recommends the EFLM President or his/her representative (i.e., a person seated in the EFLM EB) to its Members for being elected at the IFCC EB; 2) the constituent NS officially nominates this person to IFCC for organizing a ballot to have the NRs approval. The GM has fully supported this proposal and gave the mandate to the EFLM EB to propose an official procedure, which manages all necessary steps in accordance with this decision (including a change in the EFLM statutes if needed). The proposal was voted and approved by more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the NSs.

Executive board

Through the EFLM program entitled EFLM Presence at NS meetings, during 2016 EB members participated in four EFLM NS meetings hosted by Slovenia, Romania, Portugal and Sweden.

The recently proposed amendments to the EFLM Articles of Association have been positively voted by EFLM Member Societies. These amendments allow aligning of EB roles to the new bylaws. Aligning of EB roles and elections for new EB members shall be held during the next GM, on Sunday 11 June 2017 (from h. 14.00 to h. 18.15) on the occasion of the 22nd IFCC-EFLM EuroMedLab Congress.

In order to start the whole new EB on 1 January 2018, the GM in Athens will be asked to extend the positions of the present Secretary, Treasurer and Members until 31 December 2017 and to accept the Vice-President position to act as President from 1 January 2018. Originally these positions would stop their 2nd term of office at the date of the GM in 2017, i.e. in Athens in June. At the same time the position of President, Vice-President and Past President would end the month before on 31 December 2017. Considering the appointment in March 2016, the mandate would be 21 months instead of 24. This was approved by the NSs with of more than $\frac{3}{4}$.

The next election of the Executive Board Members will follow the new EFLM Articles of Association and the transitional provision will be applied. EB has recently launched a call for nominations from National Societies for the following positions to serve for the term of office 2018-2019: President-Elect (to serve as President for 2020-2021), Secretary, Treasurer and 2 Members-at-Large.

The deadline to submit nominations was 31 March 2017. Voting for officers of the EFLM Executive Board 2018-2019 shall take place in Athens in June, at the tenth GM.

Committees

COMMITTEE – COMMUNICATION (C-C)

During 2016, special effort was dedicated to support and promote the work of the EFLM Working Groups that are the backbone of the scientific and professional activities of the Federation. A specific space was created inside the EFLM website where all the WGs could post freely available documents and educational materials to substantiate their activities and projects. A similar effort was dedicated to consolidate the collaboration with the National Societies: the Guidelines issued by the EFLM NSs can now be posted in a dedicated subpage of the website with the aim to build, in the near future, joint European Guidelines on specific topics. Furthermore, to increase the quality of the EFLM surveys that are prepared and distributed to the NSs rather frequently, a workshop on survey methodology was organized during the EFLM-UEMS Congress in Warsaw. The presence of EFLM in the social media has been greatly improved during this year: the Federation now has Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and a LinkedIn Company page. EFLM has started sharing news using the social media of the EFLM National Societies, IFCC and AACC. In 2016, EFLM started a project (to be completed in 2017) of restyling the EFLM image including a new website, a new logo and above all, the production and publication of its own Newsletter: the bimonthly EuroLabNews.

COMMITTEE – EDUCATION AND TRAINING (C-ET)

C-ET has been involved in the organization of the 12th Symposium of the Balkan region and is involved in the Congress Organizing Committee for the 23rd Euromedlab in Barcelona and the 13th Symposium of the Balkan region. A new preliminary version of the former EC4 European Syllabus has been assigned to C-ET for finalization of an updated document of an EFLM European Syllabus in 2017. A Task and Finish Group has been established with 18 members working on a continuing professional development (CPD) crediting system; co-operation with UEMS is under initiation.

The development of a program for exchanging practice and practical training within EFLM countries is in progress in WG-CPE (Congress & Postgraduate Education). WG-DE produced six webinars in 2016, recordings were subsequently posted on YouTube. Selected presentations were recorded from the EFLM-UEMS Congress to be presented later on an EFLM e-learning platform, which is also under development.

Committee – Profession (C-P) and EC4 Foundation

Towards the end of 2016, EC4's Board of Governors (the presidents of the EU-based national societies affiliated to EC4) voted for the dissolution of the EC4 Foundation Board and transfer assets such as the EC4 Register of 'Specialists in Laboratory Medicine' to EFLM. More than 3/4 of the EU-based NSs voted and of these more than 3/4 were in favor. All members of the EC4 Board then voted to dissolve the EC4 Foundation. The

change reflected the diminishing infrastructure in EC4 being mirrored by the rising profile and infrastructure in EFLM. This report takes the opportunity to acknowledge the notable building blocks achieved by key individuals in EC4 in pursuit of recognition of specialists under EU Directives such as 2013/55/EU (The Recognition of Professional Qualifications); a Common Training Framework has been proposed to the EU Commission, syllabi for education/training in laboratory medicine and codes of conduct have been published, and the unifying term of 'Specialist in Laboratory Medicine' has been adopted.

The importance of continuing to pursue recognition was reflected in EFLM's Executive Board decision in early December to preserve the function of EC4's Register Commission by establishing a new 'Register Working Group' for whom a key remit will be to grow the Register. The Profession Committee continues to press the EU Commission for acceptance of a Common Training Framework, this in turn being the passport to free professional migration across EU borders as well as acting as a catalyst for raising awareness of laboratory medicine's contribution.

COMMITTEE – QUALITY AND REGULATIONS (C-QR)

WG A/ISO (Accreditation & ISO) was able to achieve the inclusion of the requirement for IVD manufacturers to provide information to the customers on lot-to lot differences in the new IVD Regulation which will become mandatory in the European Union. C and its WG are working on developing publications in relation with ISO15189 on reference values, retention time, POCT and measurement uncertainty. Representatives of the WG and Committee were active in ISOTC212, CENTC140 and the Health care Committee of the EA (European cooperation on Accreditation).

COMMITTEE – SCIENCE (C-S)

The nine WGs under this Committee (Biological Variation, Cardiac Markers, Guidelines, Harmonisation of the Total Testing Process, Patient Focused Laboratory Medicine, Personalised Laboratory Medicine, Postanalytical Phase, Preanalytical Phase and Test Evaluation) and the two Task and Finish Groups (Laboratory Testing for Dyslipidaemia and Standardisation of the Colour Coding for Blood Collection Closures) remain highly active in focusing on topics which are of direct relevance in improving the effectiveness of laboratory medicine to patients. Particular highlights include: developing a means of grading the quality of biological variation studies; the lipid guidelines developed collaboratively with the European Atherosclerosis Society; initiatives to establish test unit and blood container colour standardisation; involving scientists in advising patients directly on their laboratory results; and ensuring emerging technologies such as proteomics develop within existing laboratory medicine disciplines.

Meetings

EFLM has organized three meetings during 2016:

1. 12th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region, May 25–27, 2016; Belgrade (Serbia)
2. 4th EFLM -UEMS European Joint Congress "Laboratory

Medicine at the Clinical Interface", 21-24 September 2016; Warsaw (Poland)

3. EFLM Test evaluation course, 9-11 November 2016; Leiden (The Netherlands)

Publications

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HOT TOPICS IN LABORATORY MEDICINE

Cost and (real) value of laboratory medicine. What the future holds?



by Giuseppe Lippi
Section of Clinical Biochemistry
University of Verona, Verona, Italy

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 - Ceriotti F. Harmonization initiatives in Europe. *eJIFCC* 2016;27:023-9
 - Kristoffersen AH, Ajzner E, Rogic D, Sozmen EY, Carraro P, Faria AP, Watine J, Meijer P, Sandberg S; joint EFLM-EQALM Working Group on Postanalytical Phase (WG-POST). Is D-dimer used according to clinical algorithms in the diagnostic work-up of patients with suspicion of venous thromboembolism? A study in six European countries. *Thromb Res.* 2016;142:1-7.
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At the dawn of the third millennium, there is still open debate about the real impact of laboratory diagnostics on managed care. In particular, the perception of the (real) “value” of laboratory medicine remains one unresolved issue. This is basically due to the fact that the term “value” can be taken in many different ways (Figure 1).

According to a conventional interpretation of some policymakers, hospital administrators and clinicians, laboratory value is a surrogate of cost, which can then be easily measured in terms of price per test and overall laboratory expenditure. The concept of cost estimation is less circumstantial when translated into clinical practice, since the overall cost of managing a patient with a very common pathology such as acute myocardial infarction cannot be fully estimated with the relative diagnosis related group (DRG) or International Classification of Disease (ICD) code, due to need of managing the many frequent comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart failure, impaired renal function, cancer, etc. Unlike many other healthcare settings, therefore, the cost of a clinical laboratory can be estimated according to the budget spent for purchasing or hiring instrumentation, reagents and consumables. Yet, this cost remains far below 2.5% of the overall healthcare expenditure in most countries, and typically comprised between 1.2-1.8% across Europe. Notably, the perception that most clinicians have about the real cost of *in vitro* diagnostics (IVD) is dramatically mistaken. As reported by a well-designed study published in *Plos One*, the vast majority (over 80%) of German and US physicians believe that the IVD costs is greater than 4% of the total healthcare expenditure (1).

Another, more realistic and valuable, interpretation can be given to the concept of “value” of laboratory diagnostics. It has been argued that up to 70% of all health care decisions impacting diagnosis or patient management may involve one or more laboratory investigations. This estimate is not really far from reality, as was recently proven by the same study published in *Plos One* (1), demonstrating that 66% of decision-making is based on IVD. This is obviously a “mean” percentage, inflated by some notable peaks (e.g., the diagnosis of non-ST elevation myocardial infarction can only be made measuring cardiac troponins with high-sensitivity immunoassays), but also hiding some reasonable troughs (e.g., the research on epigenetics and innovative biomarkers for early diagnosis of cancer is still in embryo). Regardless of the definitive percentage of clinical decisions influenced by laboratory tests results, the essential role of laboratory diagnostics is now undeniable for assuring high quality of care, and will become even more prominent in the

foreseeable future, toughly built around personalized (precision) medicine.

So, what does the future hold for laboratory medicine? In a world with limited resources, just now recovering from an unprecedented economic crisis, which has profoundly impacted the budgets of many healthcare services worldwide, there are two leading paradigms for reaffirming the real value, along with the sustainability, of laboratory diagnostics. The former and rather predictable solution entails focusing more on appropriateness. Several lines of evidence attest that inappropriate testing (both under- and over-use) is still high in routine practice, often exceeding 60-70% of all requests. The large amount of money wasted for avoidable tests may hence be seen as a precious treasure to recover for implementing innovative tests, so moving forward or fostering personalized care (2). The second solution encompasses enhancing the visibility of IVD as a medical discipline and as a profession, emphasizing the crucial role of laboratory testing in several care pathways. It should be firmly



FIGURE 1.
Laboratory medicine, between costs and value.

avowed that laboratory Medicine is an essential part of a multi-disciplinary team at the centre of healthcare. Spending more for performing new diagnostic or prognostic tests significantly contributes to reduce performing additional (often more costly and invasive) investigations, to improve clinical outcomes and save money downstream the managed care. This is clearly mirrored by the concept that a more efficient and timely diagnosis usually allows treatment of diseases at an earlier stage, so improving the overall efficiency of care and preventing potential complications. Nonetheless, improving appropriateness is not an easy enterprise, and no single approach was proven really effective alone. A multifaceted intervention should hence be defined, combining different strategies such as physicians' education about the clinical significance of laboratory tests, implementation of evidence-based guidelines, adoption of prescription help-guides, implementation of informatics aids to flag or stop potentially avoidable testing or even providing reference prices for tests.

The future of laboratory medicine mostly lies in our hands. It may also be brighter, provided that we will be able to increase awareness of the "value chain" of IVD beyond the laboratory and into the broader system of care (i.e., impact on patient care, health outcomes and health care costs).

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1. Rohr UP, Binder C, Dieterle T, et al. The value of in vitro diagnostic testing in medical practice: a status report. *PLoS One* 2016;11:e0149856.
2. Lippi G, Bassi A, Bovo C. The future of laboratory medicine in the era of precision medicine. *J Lab Prec Med* 2016;1:7.

NEWS FROM EFLM COMMITTEES

EFLM Working Group "Register" up and running!

by Gilbert Wieringa, Chair of the EFLM Profession Committee, and Inez-Anne Haagen, Chair of the Working Group "Register"

Following the transfer of the EC4 Register to EFLM in December 2016 the Profession Committee is delighted to welcome **3 full members** to this **new Working Group** chaired by Inez-Anne Haagen:

- Josep Queralto, Spain
- Jaroslav Racek, Czech Republic
- Ivana Rako, Croatia

In addition the following have accepted nominations from their national societies to become **corresponding members** to the group:

- Hannsjörg Baum, Germany
- Jennifer Brady, Ireland
- Snezana Jovicic, Serbia
- Evgenia Konsta, Greece
- Mario Pazzagli, Italy
- Antonio Reche Martinez, UK
- Ferhan Girgin Sagin, Turkey
- Dalius Vitkus, Lithuania

The overarching aim of the group is to increase the number of registrants able to hold the title **European Specialist in Laboratory Medicine (EUSpLM)**. The EUSpLM title is widely recognised as a badge of high quality practice and the Register plays a key role in supporting the case for recognition of

specialists at EU Commission level. Recognition under EU Directive 2013/55/EU in turn allows specialists' free professional movement across EU borders and helps promote laboratory medicine's profile.

Individual or, preferably, auto-registration applications via national societies to hold the EUSpLM title will be strongly welcomed from individuals able to meet Equivalence of Standards with their counterpart across the EU:

- Minimum 9 years (ideally 10) years academic (4/5 years) and specialist (5 years) training
- Education and training to standards set in the EC4/EFLM syllabus
- A Master's degree in Medicine, Pharmacy or Science
- A Profession Committee recognised 'Equivalence of Standards' exit qualification
- Evidence of participation in continuous professional development (CPD)

To date, 20 of the 28 EU member states' national societies have had their Equivalence of Standards approved by EC4.

The Profession Committee will welcome any further Equivalence of Standards submissions via the EFLM Office (eflm@eflm.eu) as well as any updates on education and training standards in individual countries.



Vacancies in EFLM functional units

New EFLM Working Group "Register" – deadline to send nominations: 15 April 2017

Following on from the integration in 2016 of EC4 into EFLM, a new Working Group "Register" of the Profession Committee has been formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Inez-Ann Haagen to take on many of the functions of EC4's Register Commission. Nominations are invited from EFLM National Society Members for **1 Young Scientist Specialists in Laboratory Medicine (EUSpLM) ≤35 years**, to act as Young Scientist Member, willing to support the chair of the group in the following:

- to adjudicate applications to hold the title European Specialist in Laboratory Medicine (EUSpLM)
- to grow the Register
- to support the Profession Committee in its strategy to achieve recognition of Specialists in Laboratory Medicine.

EFLM Working Group "Postanalytical Phase" – deadline to send nominations: 15 April 2017

Clinical knowledge and skills combined with laboratory expertise are needed for optimal interpretation of laboratory results in the setting of the individual patient. Increasing number of studies emphasise the need for improving the clinical utilisation of laboratory tests and that laboratory professionals should play a more prominent in this optimization process. A spectrum of activities have been identified that assist clinicians in translating a certain laboratory result to diagnostic information but all too

little is known about how these activities are practiced in laboratories. The WG-POST, chaired by Prof. Eva Ajzner (Hungary), intends to support laboratories in taking a more active role in supporting a better clinical utilisation of laboratory tests. The WG-POST is a joint working group of EFLM and the European Organisation for External Quality Assurance Providers in Laboratory Medicine (EQALM).

A vacancy arose from January 2017 and we are calling nominations for 1 Full Member position.

EFLM Working Group "Harmonization of Total Testing Process" – deadline to send nominations: 30 April 2017

The EFLM Working Group on Harmonisation of Total Testing Process, chaired by Prof. Ferruccio Ceriotti (Italy), was created with the aim to act as a collector of harmonisation initiatives arising from other Working Groups or Task and Finish Groups within the EFLM and from EFLM National Member Societies in order to promote the dissemination of good practice. The WG also surveys and promotes the use of harmonised nomenclature for measurands, the standardisation of units and, where feasible, the implementation of common reference intervals in European countries.

Last January, some vacancies arose within the WG and so we are calling for nominations to 2 Full Member positions.

The terms of reference for each WG are available at www.eflm.eu. For all the above mentioned positions, the term of office will be for 2 years ending on 31 December 2018. 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. 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 has to 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 have to 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.

INVITATION

EFLM-Abbott Diagnostics Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine

EFLM
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CLINICAL CHEMISTRY
AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

Abbott



Announcement

EFLM and Abbott Diagnostics are pleased to announce the EFLM-Abbott Diagnostics Award for Excellence in Outcomes Research in Laboratory Medicine. The Award will be given to the best published paper, as judged by an independent panel of experts, which demonstrates improved outcomes (clinical and/or economic) arising out of the application or improved utilisation of an *in vitro* diagnostic test.

The award was presented for the first time at the 19th IFCC/EFLM EuroMedLab Congress 2011 in Berlin. Thereafter it will be awarded every two years at an EFLM conference. The Award will consist of a certificate and the sum of 10,000 Euro.

Criteria

All entries must be validated studies demonstrating improved outcomes (clinical and/or economic) arising out of the application or improved utilisation of an *in vitro* diagnostic test.

Entries must have been published or finally accepted for publication between 1 February 2015 and 20 April 2017.

Entries must be published in English in a peer-reviewed medical, scientific or health economics journal.

Entries must have been produced by an individual or group working wholly or mainly within Europe (as defined by WHO – www.euro.who.int/countryinformation). The submitting author must be from an EFLM National Society Member.

It is a condition of entry that applicants agree to the use of the data and conclusions presented in the paper for purposes of promotion of laboratory medicine by EFLM. Only conclusions specifically presented in the paper will be used in such materials, and authors will be acknowledged in and have the right of review of any materials produced.

Submission Procedure

Applications for the Award must be submitted by one of the authors of the paper and must be accompanied by:

- Reprint of the publication or (in the case of publications in

press), a manuscript copy and a copy of the journal Editor's letter indicating the final acceptance for publication;

- Short CV of the submitting author;
- Statement signed by all authors of the publication consenting to submission of the paper for the Award and to the conditions of entry.

Applications, clearly marked "EFLM-Abbott Diagnostics Award", should be submitted to the EFLM via e-mail to the address eflm@eflm.eu, by 20 April 2017.

Applications will be judged by an independent panel appointed by the EFLM Science Committee including expertise in clinical medicine, evidence-based medicine, health economics and clinical laboratory science.

The Award (10,000 Euro and a framed certificate) will be presented at the 22nd IFCC-EFLM EuroMedLab Congress in Athens (June 11-15, 2017). The Award will be presented to the submitting author, who is responsible for division of the award among his/her co-authors.

Visit us online:



www.abbottdiagnostics.com

EFLM-HyTest Cardiac Marker Award for remarkable scientific work in the field of cardiovascular diseases



The EFLM-HyTest Cardiac Marker Award is granted to a young scientist for remarkable scientific work in the field of cardiovascular diseases. EFLM is very pleased to have partnered with HyTest on this award, through which we intend to achieve wider recognition of the importance of high quality research in the field of cardiac markers among laboratory professionals in Europe.

Eligibility criteria:

The applicant must fulfill the following criteria:

- Age under 40 years;
- Member of an EFLM member country;
- Study accepted for peer-reviewed publication by the submission deadline in which the nominee must be first author.

Award timing:

The EFLM-HyTest Cardiac Marker Award is awarded biannually. This year, the award will be presented at the 22nd IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EuroMedLab 2017) to be held in Athens (GR) from 11 to 15 June 2017.

Award details:

The selected scientist will receive an award of € 5000 and the costs for attending the EuroMedLab Congress (economy class travel, reasonable accommodation and the congress registration fee).

Submission details:

The applicants should send the reprint of their article or a copy of the editor's letter indicating final acceptance for publication to the EFLM office at eflm@eflm.eu. Articles must have been published or accepted for publication between 1 January 2016 and 20 April 2017. Entries must be published in English in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Applicants should also send a statement signed by all authors of the publication consenting to submission of the paper for the Award and to the conditions of entry. Submissions will be judged by an independent panel of experts. The nominee must be the first author and a member of an EFLM member society. The Award will be presented to the first author, who is responsible for division of the award among his/her co-authors.

- *Applications deadline: April 20, 2017*
- *Winner will be notified: April 30, 2017*

For further information on the submission process please contact the Chair of the EFLM Science Committee, Prof. Eric Kilpatrick at eflm@eflm.com.

About HyTest

Established in 1994, HyTest Ltd is a recognized producer of high-quality monoclonal antibodies and antigens for the diagnostic industry all around the world. Building on a strong scientific basis, HyTest has become the global market leader in supplying certain reagents. With several products appointed as the best in the world. HyTest is a company with an excellent track record and is known for its uncompromising quality. This quality extends to the whole wide product range. Continuous investments in R&D ensure a constant flow of new, even better reagents for the customers. That's why most of the major diagnostic companies rely on HyTest's ability to supply the best reagents in the world. For more information visit: www.hytest.fi

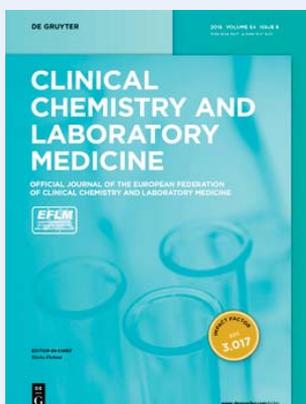


Upcoming Event: EuroMedLab Athens 2017

EUROMEDLAB
ATHENS 2017
11-15 JUNE

THE EFLM OFFICE INFORMS

CCLM the International Scientific Journal of EFLM



According to the agreement between EFLM and De Gruyter Publishers, we are very pleased to inform you that free subscriptions to the Journal *Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine* (CCLM) have been renewed for EFLM Chairs of Committees and Workings Groups, National Representatives and Presidents of EFLM National Society Members.

CCLM is the official Scientific Journal of EFLM. It is published on a monthly basis and is the most relevant Journal in Clinical Chemistry in Europe. The CCLM Impact Factor is 3.017 (2015).

We take this occasion to remind you of the special subscription conditions reserved to EFLM member societies:

Eur 24.90 per member and year - when all members of the Society are subscribers and have online access to the CCLM online contents via a link in the member area of the Society website (no price change compared to 2016, and 90% discount at the individual online subscription rate of Eur 249.00).

Eur 26.15 per member and year for National Societies with more than 500 members - when not all, but only a group of Society members subscribe to CCLM and get access to the CCLM contents via access token (89.50% discount at the individual online subscription rate of Eur 249.00).

Eur 37.35 per member and year for National Societies with less than 500 members - when not all, but only a group of Society members subscribe to CCLM and get access to the CCLM contents via access token (85% discount at the individual online subscription rate of Eur 249.00).

Do not miss the opportunity to benefit of these special rates!

For any further information on subscription opportunities, please contact Ms Heike Jahnke at: heike.jahnke@degruyter.com

22nd IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine "EuroMedLab 2017" will be held in Athens, Greece, from 11 to 15 June 2017 at the Megaron Congress Center. Co-organized by IFCC, EFLM and the Greek Society of Clinical Chemistry - Clinical Biochemistry (GSCC-CB), the congress offers an excellent programme with up-to-date topics on laboratory medicine to be presented by renowned speakers. With symposia, debates, "meet the experts" meetings and workshops, this 5-day event offers an open forum for interactive discussions in the topics of laboratory medicine.

During EuroMedLab in Athens, three EFLM Symposia will be held, covering pivotal topics of Laboratory Medicine and very important learning objectives.

1) Monday June 10; 10.30-12.30. Room: Trianti Hall EFLM Symposium: **Harmonisation in laboratory medicine**

Ana Maria Simundic (HR)	The contribution of the EFLM WG-PRE to the harmonisation of preanalytical phase of laboratory examination process in Europe
Wim Huisman (NL)	Harmonisation of medical laboratory accreditation: the importance of being involved in all steps
Gilbert Wieringa (UK)	Harmonising the recognition of specialists in laboratory medicine across Europe
Elizabeta Topic (HR)	Harmonising the recognition of specialists in laboratory medicine across Europe

Session Overview

Harmonisation is a fundamental aspect of quality in laboratory medicine; its main goal is to provide a better patient outcome producing comparable laboratory information irrespective of where and how the laboratory data have been obtained. Harmonisation involves all the steps of the total testing process (pre-analytical, analytical, and post analytical phase); it embraces however any aspect of the profession: from laboratory accreditation to professional development, to the recognition of laboratory medicine specialists in Europe. The symposium covers these topics with lectures dealing with the harmonisation of the pre-analytical phase, the medical laboratory accreditation, the recognition of the profession in Europe, the continuous professional development.

Learning Objectives

After this session, participants will be able to:

1. Operate to harmonise the steps of the preanalytical phase.
2. Understand the need to achieve a uniform accreditation system in Europe.
3. Understand as to why many promising cancer biomarkers fail in the clinic.
4. Learn strategies for avoiding false discovery, through elimination of biases in the discovery and validation process.
5. Appreciate the value of using high quality clinical material for both biomarker discovery and validation.

2) Wednesday June 14; 10.30 - 12.30. Room: Lambrakis Hall EFLM Symposium: **Performance specifications in laboratory medicine - Part 1**

Mauro Panteghini (IT)	Defining performance specifications in laboratory testing
Sverre Sandberg (NO)	The new EFLM biological variation database based on a critical appraisal check-list
Ferruccio Ceriotti (IT)	Criteria for allocation of laboratory tests to the three Milan models for performance

Session Overview

The session will provide an overview of different models to set performance specifications in laboratory medicine; 1) based on clinical outcome, on 2) biological variation, and 3) state of the art. In addition, it will address the total error concept, and performance specifications in external quality assessment schemes and in the extra-analytical phases.

Learning Objectives

After this session, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the different principles for setting performance specifications.
2. Achieve practical skills in selecting performance specifications for different measurands (analytes).
3. Understand the total error and uncertainty concepts and their role in judging analytical performance.
4. Understand how to set performance specifications and quality indicators in the extra-analytical phases.

3) Wednesday June 14; 14.30 - 16.30. Room: Lambrakis Hall EFLM Symposium: **Performance specifications in laboratory medicine - Part 2**

Wytze Oosterhuis (NL)	Are total error and uncertainty of measurement two sides of the same coin?
Graham Jones (AU)	Performance specifications in EQAS
Mario Plebani (IT)	Performance specifications in extra-analytical phases

Session Overview

The session will provide an overview of different models to set performance specifications in laboratory medicine; 1) based on clinical outcome, on 2) biological variation, and 3) state of the art. In addition, it will address the total error concept, and performance specifications in external quality assessment schemes and in the extra-analytical phases.

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4. Understand how to set performance specifications and quality indicators in the extra-analytical phases.

Visit www.athens2017.org
for the detailed scientific programme

Deadline for early registration is April 30, 2017.
Don't miss the opportunity for early registration.
Reduced registration fee is offered for young scientists (<35 years of age).

Please save the date and don't miss EuroMedLab 2017 in Athens. Check out the Congress website for further information:
<http://www.athens2017.org/>

EFLM EVENTS



Report on the 4th EFLM-BD European Conference on Preanalytical Phase



EFLM thanks BD for the kind and unconditional support

By Ana-Maria Simundic, Chair of the Organizing and Scientific Conference Committee

The 4th EFLM-BD European Conference on Preanalytical Phase, organized by the European Federation of Laboratory Medicine (EFLM) and sponsored by BD Life Sciences, Preanalytical Systems, was held on 24-25 March 2017 in Amsterdam under the auspices of IFCC.

Almost 600 participants from all over Europe and beyond attended the conference which represents the largest such preanalytical conference in Europe. Our guiding principle is to be different, pragmatic, practical and interactive, to address challenges, to raise questions and offer answers.

The focus of the conference was the quality of the preanalytical phase of the laboratory work.

The conference programme was tailored to deliver up-to-date knowledge in the field and create an open forum for interactive

discussions. The Conference Sessions covered the following topics:

- Innovations in Preanalytical Phase
- Demand management
- POCT and preanalytics
- EFLM WG-PRE blood sampling project
- Improving the quality of blood sampling - role of local, regional and national resources

134 posters were presented at the conference. The participants' abstracts have been published in the CCLM on-line journal (Clin Chem Lab Med 2017;55:eA1-eA66) and are freely available at the conference website: www.preanalytical-phase.org/go/abstracts. Speakers abstracts were published as a collective opinion paper also downloadable from the above mentioned link:

Improving quality in the preanalytical phase through innovation

Lippi G, Baird GS, Banfi G, Bölenius K, Cadamuro J, Church S, Cornes MP, Dacey A, Guillon A, Hoffmann G, Nybo M, Premawardhana LD, Salinas M, Sandberg S, Slingerland R, Stankovic A, Sverresdotter SM, Vermeersch P, Simundic AM, on behalf of the European Federation for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM) Working Group for Preanalytical Phase (WG-PRE). *Clin Chem Lab Med* 2017;55(4):489-500.

Two poster awards were given during the conference, one by the decision of the Scientific Committee: "G-forces during pneumatic tube sample transport: a cause of hemolysis?" by Heireman Laura and Uyttenbroeck Wim (Belgium) and one voted by the audience: "Comparison of BD Vacutainer® Barricor™ Plasma Blood Collection Tubes for Various Biochemical Tests" by Kösem Arzu, Topçuoğlu Canan, Sezer Sevilay, Köksal Cevher Şimal, Çoşkun Yenigün Ezgi, Dede Fatih, Turhan Turan (Turkey).



One of the EFLM bursary recipient (Dr. Sophie Hepburn and Prof. Ana-Maria Simundic)

EFLM bursaries were granted to 4 Young Scientists (under 35y) covering conference registration, travel and accommodation.

- Eline VAN DEN HAGEN from The Netherlands
- Sophie HEPBURN from UK
- Valery BRUNEL from France
- Ali YAMAN from Turkey

Bursary recipients also received a free annual on-line subscription to the Journal "CCLM", kindly offered by W. de Gruyter.

We hope that participants have enjoyed the scientific content and format of the meeting as well as the opportunity to interact with experts and colleagues from all over Europe. We will continue to be different, to raise issues, to encourage interactive discussions and explore many more challenges to address. We will listen to your wishes and needs and will try to focus on topics that you find most interesting and important.

We therefore invite you to join us also for the next Conference that will be held in Munich in March 2019. We are very much looking forward to your attendance!

Conference Organizers



The EFLM WG "Preanalytical-Phase"



EFLM Symposium: cutting edge at Laboratory Medicine (CELME)

Join us to share the latest innovative thinking in the delivery of the best laboratory medicine activities.

Learn from expert innovators presenting new ways of solving the financial, quality and organizational problems facing us all.

If you want to lead your laboratory service to "first class" performance then join us and participate in the shared experiences of like-minded professionals.

Places are limited, so first come, first served, so don't delay register today!

Preliminary programme

October 5th 2017

13.00–14.15	Regulatory Matters Ensuring IVD input into clinical evidence Carla Deakin
	Why is Harmonization and Standardization so difficult? Sverre Sandberg
	Panel Discussion
14.15–14.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
14.45–16.30	The 'Omics' revolution The Economics of Genomics: "Cost versus Benefit" Mario Pazzagli
	Has Lab on a chip arrived? Albert van den Berg
	Liquid profiling (biopsy): a new universe for Laboratory Medicine Michael Neumaier
	Panel Discussion
16.30–17.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
17.00–18.15	Power of Digitalization in Clinical Laboratories – Sepehr Seyedzadeh – Siemens Healthineers
	Automation of the Clinical Laboratory Martin Obermeier
	Panel Discussion
19.30	<i>Welcome cocktail</i>

October 6th 2017

09.00–11.00	Adding Value Consolidation of Laboratory Activities is Necessary: Economic and Clinical Aspects Burhard G. Piper – Limbach Gruppe
	Digital Pathology: Revolutionizing Histopathology Bernard Colon Roche
	Revolution in the Laboratory: Patients as Customers Wytze Oosterhuis
	Opportunities and Barriers to merging Public Service Medical Laboratories Ian Watson
11.00–11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30–13.00	Delivering Quality Solving practical problems: what color should blood-tube tops be? an industry & profession partnership Ana-Maria Simundic and Stephen Church
	How can Business Intelligence optimize hospital laboratory workflow's and deliver a valid contribution to improve quality medicine and the overall profitability Alexander Hoffmann, Abbott Laboratories
	What metrics meaningfully measure lab performance? Mario Plebani
13.00–13.30	Discussion / Future Perspectives
13.30–13.45	Closing remarks

For more information visit <http://www.celme2017.cz>



Changing of the Guard in EFLM National Societies

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

Prof. Giuseppe Lippi (Section of Clinical Biochemistry, University of Verona, Verona, Italy) is the new EFLM National Representative for SIBioC replacing Prof. Andrea Mosca. A warm welcome to Prof. Lippi and a big thanks to Prof. Mosca for his collaboration and always prompt support to EFLM activities during these past years.

Slovenian Association for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Dr. Blaž Krhin (Dept. of Laboratory Diagnostics, Institute of Oncology, Ljubljana) is the new President of the Slovenian Association for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine replacing Dr. Evgenija Homšak. Dr. Krhin will also act as EFLM National Representative. A warm welcome to Dr. Krhin and a big thanks to Prof. Homšak for her collaboration and always prompt support to EFLM activities as National Representative and SZKKLM President during these past years.

News about EFLM National Societies

Association of Laboratory Specialists and Organizations «Federation of Laboratory Medicine» (FLM)

The EFLM Full National Society Member "Russian Scientifically-Practical Society of Specialists in Laboratory Medicine (RSPSSLM)" merged with the newly formed "Association of Laboratory Specialists and Organizations - «Federation of Laboratory Medicine» (FLM). The Federation President is Prof. Anatoly G. Kochetov and the EFLM National Representative is Dr. Olga V. Lyang. A warm welcome to Prof. Kochetov and Dr. Lyang a big thanks to Prof. Lina Khorovskaya and Prof. Vladimir Dolgov for their collaboration during the past years.

Spanish Association of Analytical Pharmacists (AEFA)

The Spanish Association of Analytical Pharmacists (AEFA) has joined EFLM as a new Affiliate Member in addition to the Full Member of EFLM for Spain, which is the Spanish Association for Laboratory Medicine (SEQC-ML). With this new membership, EFLM has now 39 Full Members (i.e. those National Societies entitled to vote on occasion of consultation), 2 Affiliate Members and 1 Provisional Member representing in total 40 European Countries.

Update on EFLM publications

By MariaStella Graziani, Chair of the EFLM Communications

Two papers have been recently included in the EFLM Publication list.

1. Recommendation for the review of biological reference intervals in medical laboratories

Henny J, Vassault A, Boursier G, Vukasovic I, Mesko Brguljan P, Lohmander M et al.
on behalf of the EFLM Working Group Accreditation and ISO/CEN standards (WG-A/ISO).
Clin Chem Lab Med. 2016;54:1893-900.

As clearly stated at the beginning of the article, the paper should not be considered an official EFLM paper.

Actually, the document is based on the original recommendation of the Expert Panel on the Theory of Reference Values of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC). Updated guidelines were recently published under the auspices of the IFCC and the Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI) and the paper discusses many of the proposed recommendations.

Among the proposals, the document summarizes: (i) The terminology, which is often confusing. (ii) The method for the determination of reference limits. (iii) The procedure allowing medical laboratories to fulfil the requirements of the regulation and standards.

2. Sample collections from healthy volunteers for biological variation estimates' update: a new project undertaken by the Working Group on Biological Variation established by the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Carobene A, Strollo M, Jonker N, Barla G, Bartlett WA, Sandberg S et al.
on behalf of the EFLM Working Group Biological Variation (WG-BV).
Clin Chem Lab Med 2016;54:1599-608.

The paper describes the results of a European project aimed to establish a biobank of samples from healthy subjects to be used to produce high quality data on Biological Variation (BV). A biobank of 18,000 aliquots was established consisting of 120 aliquots of serum, 40 of EDTA plasma, and 40 of citrated-plasma from each enrolled subject (n=91). This biobank of well-characterised samples collected under controlled conditions will allow deliver of an European resource to enable production of contemporary BV data.

NEWS FROM THE SPANISH SOCIETY OF LABORATORY MEDICINE (SEQC^{ML})

The clinical laboratory reinforces its commitment to quality in the National Health System with 5 recommendations of things “not to do”

The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine collaborates with the Ministry of Health and 50 societies in the project “A Commitment to Quality by Scientific Societies in Spain”

- Unnecessary tests are performed daily in clinical laboratories, despite having little or no efficacy and not being cost-effective.
- Clinical laboratory professionals should be committed to reviewing and evaluating the analytical tests requested by clinicians and avoiding unnecessary testing.
- The SEQC^{ML} has a Strategic Plan in advanced stages of development that includes an extensive test optimization policy, with the philosophy of “not to do” at the forefront.

The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQC^{ML}), a member of the **“Not To Do” project of the Ministry of Health**, has implemented 5 recommendations to reinforce its commitment to quality and efficiency in the National Health System. These are guidelines aimed at reducing the number of unnecessary tests in daily use at clinical laboratories, that is, those that have not demonstrated efficacy, have little or dubious effectiveness, and are not cost-effective.

The creation of the recommendations and the inclusion of the SEQC^{ML} in this project respond to the need for “direct involvement of the clinical laboratory in this initiative for commitment to quality”, explains Dr. Francisco A. Bernabeu, member of the Board of the SEQC^{ML}, corresponding member of the EFLM Working Group Accreditation and ISO/CEN standards and responsible for the “Not To Do” project. In his view, “Clinical laboratory practitioners should collaborate with requesting clinicians in seeking to improve the quality and efficiency of patient care”.

The “Not To Do” initiative was launched in 2013 by the Ministry of Health, Social Services, and Equality in response to an initiative of the Spanish Society of Internal Medicine (SEMI), which in turn was based on similar international experiences such as “Choosing Wisely” in the United States, or that developed by NICE in the United Kingdom. The project is part of the activities

of the Spanish Network of Health Technology Assessment Agencies. To date, 50 scientific societies have participated. The SEQC^{ML} joined in 2015, but it was in 2016 when the five agreements on things “not to do” in the clinical laboratory were presented. The recommendations are as follows:

- Do not request multiple tests on the initial assessment of a patient with suspected thyroid disease. First, request a test of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), and if it is abnormal, continue with additional evaluation or with treatment.
- The determination of total CK or CK-MB, or AST, or LDH, or myoglobin for the diagnosis of myocardial damage (or myocardial infarction) is not recommended.
- Do not test for allergen-specific IgE in a patient whose clinical history shows no symptoms of adverse reactions or without previous “in vivo” tests. In any case, do not perform systematic studies of various immunoglobulins against allergens without a thorough review of the patient's medical history.
- Do not carry out population screening for vitamin D deficiency by measuring serum 25-hydroxy vitamin D (Calcidiol).
- Do not request a sedimentation rate or erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) to assess inflammation in patients with undefined diagnosis. To detect pro-inflammatory status in the acute phase, request C-reactive protein (CRP).

Dr Bernabeu points out that “these five measures were selected from a large number proposed by the SEQC^{ML} expert group”. These guidelines were presented, along with those of seven other scientific societies, in the “Commitment to Quality by Scientific Societies in Spain” Conference, held on May 2016.



SIBioC's support to the project “Slow Medicine”



by Giuseppe Lippi, EFLM National Representative for SIBioC

SIBioC, the Italian Society of Laboratory Medicine supports the Italian initiative “Slow Medicine”, a network grouping of Scientific and Citizens Associations. The network project is based on similar experiences worldwide (e.g. Choosing Wisely in the United States and Canada) and is aimed at promoting appropriate and good quality care for everybody.

The Scientific Associations of the network have been asked to list 5 diagnostic tests or treatments that, according to available evidence, are of no proven benefit for the general population or for a specific patient.

The basic principle is: Doing more does not mean doing better.

The SIBioC list of the “Not to do” laboratory tests are below:



1	<p>Do not perform serum electrophoresis or Bence Jones protein determination to identify low risk patients before imaging tests involving contrast media.</p> <p>The risk factor for these procedures is renal failure that is conventionally assessed by serum creatinine and glomerular filtration rate measurements. Plasma cell dyscrasias (PCD) are often accompanied by an impairment of renal function. However, not all the patients have compromised renal function, so PCD are not risk factors for contrast media nephropathy "per se".</p>
2	<p>Do not perform AST, LDH, CK, CK-MB, myoglobin for diagnosing myocardial infarction.</p> <p>The only recommended laboratory test for diagnosing acute myocardial infarction is troponin (I or T) measurement. This test, especially the new generation of assays displaying increased diagnostic sensitivity, outperform other available tests.</p>
3	<p>Do not perform urine glucose measurement for monitoring diabetes</p> <p>This test does not have the necessary diagnostic characteristics. The laboratory test to be used is glycated haemoglobin (HbA1c).</p>
4	<p>Do not perform tumor markers such as CEA, CA-125, HE4, CA-15.3, alpha-fetoprotein or CA-19.9 for the diagnosis of cancer.</p> <p>Sensitivity and specificity of these tests are not adequate for this purpose, especially when used in a population with low prevalence of the diseases. Their use is better indicated for monitoring purposes.</p>
5	<p>Do not perform amylase AND lipase in patients during in the diagnosis of acute pancreatitis.</p> <p>The measurement of lipase shows better diagnostic characteristics for diagnosing acute pancreatitis</p>

NOTE: The suggestions listed above do not replace clinical evaluation and judgement, and have been selected among other proposals by the Executive Board of SIBioC.

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EFLM bursary programme for Young Scientists

Recipients of the EFLM bursary programme for the EuroMedLab 2017 Congress in Athens

In response to the invitation to apply for the EFLM bursary programme addressed to Young Scientists attending the 22nd IFCC-EFLM in Athens next June, 50 applications were received from a total of 12 different countries. All applications were eligible for selection and were carefully evaluated by a dedicated panel of EFLM Officers.

The following 10 applicants were selected to receive the EFLM support consisting of a bursary of Eur 900 covering travel and 4-night accommodation. In addition, EFLM bursary recipients will receive free congress registration and a free on-line subscription to the EFLM official journal *Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (CCLM)*, kindly offered by Walter deGruyter.

- Gizem CALIBASI, Turkey
- Jelena CULEJ, Croatia
- Wendy Petronella DEN ELZEN, Netherlands
- Isabel FORT, Spain
- Zoltan HORVATH-SZALAI, Hungary
- Miroslava RABAJDOVA, Slovak Rep
- Benoit RUCHETON, France
- Marie-Louise SCHLECK, Belgium
- Elisabetta SOTGIU, Italy
- Sandra VLADIMIROV, Serbia

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<p>20-23 April 2017 10th International & 15th National Congress on Quality Improvement in Clinical Laboratories Tehran, Iran http://iqctehran.ir/</p>	<p>11-15 June 2017 EuroMedLab 2017 - 22nd IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine Athens, Greece http://www.athens2017.org/</p>
<p>20-21 April 2017 1st Conference on Medical Laboratory Accreditation and Quality Systems: European Answers Belgrade, Serbia</p>	<p>15-16 June 2017 Under Poseidon's Eye - Symposium on Diabetes EuroMedLab2017 - Satellite Meeting Sounio, Greece http://www.athens2017.org/</p>
<p>10-13 May 2017 2nd Conference of Romanian Association of Laboratory Medicine (RALM) Timisoara, Romania http://www.raml-conference.ro</p>	<p>21-22 September 2017 13th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region Laboratory Medicine Management: Leadership skills for effective Laboratory Belgrade, Serbia http://www.dmbj.org.rs</p>
<p>11-13 May 2017 VIII Baltic Transfusion Medicine Congress & I Latvian Congress in Laboratory Medicine Riga, Latvia http://www.labtrans.org/</p>	<p>5-6 October 2017-01-24 EFLM Symposium: Cutting Edge at Laboratory Medicine (CELME) Prague, Czech Republic www.celme2017.cz</p>
<p>30-31 May 2017 VI International Symposium "Clinical Laboratory and Quality" Barcelona, Spain www.seqc.es</p>	<p>4-7 October 2017 3rd International Symposium on Advances in Circulating Tumor Cells: Liquid Biopsy in Clinical Practice - ACTC 2017 Rhodes, Greece http://www.actc2017.org/</p>
<p>10 June 2017 Metabolic Bone Disease: The Role of the Clinical Laboratory EuroMedLab2017 - Satellite Meeting Athens, Greece http://www.athens2017.org/</p>	<p>16-17 October 2017 Journées Nationales 2017 de la Société Française de Biologie Clinique Paris, France http://www.sfbc.asso.fr/</p>
<p>10-11 June 2017 Management of Inborn Errors of Metabolism: From Diagnosis to Treatment EuroMedLab2017 - Satellite Meeting Athens, Greece http://www.athens2017.org/</p>	<p>20-22 October 2017 XIV International Congress of Pediatric Laboratory Medicine Durban, South Africa http://www.icplm2017.org/</p>
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