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International Federation of Clinical Chemistry
and Laboratory Medicine

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# Editorial

Katherina Psarra, MSc, PhD, eNews Editor

**Dear colleagues**

This is my last editorial, as the eNews will have a new Editor from the beginning of 2025. It has been an honour and a real pleasure to serve as IFCC eNews Editor all these years. It has been a wonderful journey all over the world, thanks to all of you, who contributed in the eNews. I had the opportunity to learn about labs and congresses, about important people, about the profession progress, about achievements and fulfillments, about great successes. As I told you in one of my previous editorials a music from Kosmos (all the world) is sounding in my ears through your contributions to the eNews.

This eNews issue is a paradigm of this wonderful world of laboratory Medicine. In her message the IFCC President travels us in a lot of diverse congresses and places all over the world. Some of these really successful and with diverse main subjects, congresses are presented in detail in this issue. Voices from Greece, France, Jordan, Colombia, Pakistan, Argentina, Armenia, Tunisia and Spain are bringing before our eyes our colleagues, their views, their lectures, their discussions and their photos fill with colours and happy faces the eNews.

In addition, 4 VLP and 3 PSEP reports bring us in congresses and central labs in Philippines, Argentina and Colombia, in India, Japan, and Belgium and invite all colleagues to take advantage of these IFCC opportunities to visit and learn and make connections. And six young scientists from Guatemala, South Africa, Nepal, Mexico, Russia and Croatia introduce themselves and their national societies and share their dreams and hopes with us. The future of the profession looks really bright.

Finishing my editorial, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all of you who share their thoughts in the eNews, to my colleagues in the EB of the Communications and Publications Division and especially to Prof. Tahir Pillay for his guidance through the years. I would like to thank the publishing companies we cooperated with, In Soft and DiGiWeDo, for their precious work. And last but not least and with all my heart I would like to thank Ms Silvia Colli Lanzi, who is really a treasure for the eNews. I wouldn't have accomplished anything, if it was not for her organized, careful, wonderful work.

Thank you very much, dear colleagues!

Have great holidays and a Happy New Year!

Katherina

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# IFCC President's Message

December 2024
By Tomris Ozben

Prof. Tomris Ozben
EuSpLM, Ph.D.

**Dear Colleagues, Dear Friends,**

The activities of the IFCC continue to advance, and I am delighted to share some recent updates from the IFCC community and IFCC functional units. Building on the momentum of September and October, November proved to be another vibrant and productive month for IFCC member societies and regional federations.
A standout event was the XXXI Meeting of the Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF) and the 35th National Biochemistry Congress of the Turkish Biochemical Society (TBS). This prominent conference was held at the Starlight Convention Center in Side, Antalya, Türkiye, and brought together distinguished speakers and enthusiastic participants from across the globe. The event featured a comprehensive program, great exhibition, impressive attendance, and remarkable engagement during the scientific sessions, reflecting the widespread interest in the topics and speakers. This successful gathering exemplified the global community's commitment to advance the fields of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine.
The 17th Asia-Pacific Federation for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (APFCB) Congress took place in Sydney from October 31 to November 3, 2024. As the President of the IFCC, I had the honor of delivering an online welcome address to the participants, where I congratulated the organizers for their efforts in hosting this prestigious event. During the congress, the IFCC sponsored three symposia, further contributing to the advancement of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine.

1. **IFCC SD** – Establishment of a sustainable measurement infrastructure for standardized measurement of CVD biomarkers. **Co-chairs:** Christa Cobbaert, and Hubert Vesper
2. **IFCC SD** – Evaluating molecular biomarkers in a sea of proteoforms; Using next generation protein diagnostics: its time has come! **Co-chairs:** Christa Cobbaert, and Andy Hoofnagle
3. **IFCC EMD** – Improving wellness, emergency response, and resilience with Prehospital testing. **Chair:** Dr. Adil Khan CA

From November 6 to 8, 2024, I had the privilege of attending the CALILAB Congress in Buenos Aires, where I delivered two lectures. The first, titled "Green Labs for Improving Environmental Sustainability: What Are the Priorities of Medical Laboratories in Transitioning to Green Labs?", addressed the critical role of sustainability in laboratory practices. The second was one of the three plenary lectures, entitled "Navigating Current and Future Advances, Innovations, and Challenges in Laboratory Medicine: An Overview of Trends and Obstacles."
The congress, organized under the leadership of Dr. Eduardo Freggiaro, President of the Organizing Committee, and Dr. Nilda Fink, President of the Scientific Committee, featured an outstanding program. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them for orchestrating such a successful

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event. Additionally, I am deeply grateful to the entire organizing team for the warm welcome and exceptional hospitality I received during my stay in Argentina.
I am delighted to announce that the Scientific Program for the EuroMedLab Congress Brussels 2025 is now finalized and available on the congress website. The program covers a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from fundamental principles to advanced diagnostics and cutting-edge techniques in laboratory medicine. These themes will be presented by world-renowned international speakers and leading experts, ensuring an insightful and engaging experience for all attendees.

Registration and abstract submissions will open shortly, and I am pleased to announce that the IFCC will once again provide 50 bursaries for young scientists. These bursaries will grant recipients the opportunity to participate in both the Young Scientist Forum and the EuroMedLab Congress, fostering professional development, networking, and collaboration among the next generation of leaders in the field.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that, in response to requests from our Latin American colleagues, simultaneous translation between English and Spanish will be available throughout the congress. This initiative ensures that language will not be a barrier to participation and highlights our commitment to inclusivity. Should there be demand for other languages, we are open to exploring additional translation options. We are currently working to identify the most efficient and technically advanced solutions, and updates will be shared on the congress website soon.

Preparations for the IFCC General Conference are well underway. The event will take place in Bruges, Belgium, on May 16–17, 2025, just before the EuroMedLab Congress in Brussels, scheduled for May 18–22, 2025. The General Conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Bruges, providing a fitting venue for this significant gathering.
The IFCC General Conference, held every two to three years, serves as a pivotal platform for IFCC officers, leading scientists, presidents and representatives of IFCC Full and Affiliate Member Societies, IFCC Regional Federations, Corporate Members, health authorities, policymakers, MedTech Europe representatives, and other partner organizations having collaboration agreements with IFCC to discuss current activities and projects, and plan future strategic actions and initiatives of the organization.

This unique event will foster knowledge-sharing and collaboration through interactive roundtable sessions and brainstorming discussions. The 2025 edition will mark the 16th General Conference since its inception in 1981. The theme for the upcoming event, titled **"Meeting Minds Conference" is "Connecting Science, Health, and Innovation: The Future Flows Like Water."** This inspiring theme underscores the forward-thinking and adaptable spirit required to drive progress in laboratory medicine and global health. This thought-provoking theme highlights the dynamic and interconnected advancements across science, healthcare, and innovation while emphasizing the need for adaptability, collaboration, and visionary thinking to shape a sustainable future.

The first organizing committee meeting of the WorldLab New Delhi Congress, 2026 was held on November 19 and 20, 2024 in New Delhi. All the COC members except APFCB representatives and Corporate member representative attended the meeting in-presence. The COC meeting was organized by Stefano Montalbetti and Nicholas Vergani, MZ Events. The COC members who were not able to attend in-presence connected to the meeting on-line on the second day. On November 19, the COC members visited the YASHOBHOOMI Congress Venue. The congress center was impressive, extra-large, fulfilling all the requirements, very well planned and constructed, having an exhibition area more than we need without columns, several conference/meeting rooms, several rooms for closed meetings, satellite meetings, an auditorium accommodating 6000 people, three restaurants, a suitable open-air and closed area for opening cocktail reception/ceremony. An inside metro station in the congress center is connecting the congress center directly to the Delhi airport and Delhi city. All the COC members and MZ Events were satisfied with the congress center

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and its facilities. The headquarter hotel and venues for the social events/dinners were also selected. On November 20, the COC meeting was organized in the congress center and the agenda items were discussed. Prof. Sergio Bernardini and Prof. Praveen Sharma, as the Co-Chairs of the Scientific Program Committee (SPC), are developing an outstanding scientific program that will position IFCC as a leading organization in laboratory medicine. In order to apply to Conference Vetting System for ethical compliance to MedTech Europe and to start facilitating visa applications, the preliminary scientific program needs to be prepared and submitted. Soon, the congress topics will be selected, and chairs will be appointed. Most probably, there will be 7 parallel symposia sessions in the mornings and afternoons will be reserved only for educational workshops.

The last event I attended was the 18th ASEAN Conference of Clinical Laboratory Sciences 2024 (ACCLS 2024) in Brunei, organized by the Department of Laboratory Services, Ministry of Health, and the Brunei Darussalam Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists (BAMLS). The conference took place from November 21 to November 23, 2024. It brought together 300 local and regional laboratory scientists under the theme *"Laboratory Medicine in Tomorrow's Healthcare Landscape."*

In line with the conference's theme, I delivered an one-hour talk on *"Opportunities and Challenges in Laboratory Medicine."* Additionally, I had the privilege of meeting His Excellency, the Minister of Health of Brunei, in his office. This meeting provided an excellent opportunity to introduce IFCC and its activities to him. Encouragingly, he expressed interest in attending the upcoming IFCC General Conference and EuroMedLab Congress in May 2025.

Furthermore, the President of the Brunei society elected also as the new President of the Asia Assocaition of Clinical Laboratory Sciences has indicated their intention to apply for full membership of the IFCC, which marks an exciting step forward in fostering collaboration and strengthening ties with the global laboratory medicine community.

Finally, I attended the JCTLM meeting in the first week of December, held at the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM) in Sèvres, France. A key agenda of this meeting was the election of the JCTLM President and Secretary. Prof. Greg Miller's term as JCTLM President will conclude at the end of 2024. The IFCC has proudly nominated Prof. Mauro Panteghini for the presidency, and we are optimistic about his election to this prestigious role.

In addition to this important event, December promises to be a busy month, as I will participate in several other meetings while continuing to manage the IFCC's daily operations.

I am delighted to announce that Ms. Alison Vianello joined the IFCC Office on November 20 as the Executive Assistant to the IFCC President and Board. She was selected from a highly competitive pool of candidates through an interview process conducted by the IFCC President, Past President, Treasurer, and President/Chairman of the MZ Events.

Ms. Vianello holds a bachelor's degree in biology, which she earned in September 2022 from the Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Ferrara. She is also on track to complete her Master's degree in Pharmacogenomics and Precision Therapeutics at the Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan, by December 2024.

We are thrilled to welcome her to the team. In her new role, Ms. Vianello will play a pivotal part in supporting the efficient and timely execution of daily tasks for the organization and the Board. Her expertise, skills, and commitment will undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of our operations, and we are confident that she will make a meaningful and positive impact on the IFCC.

I am delighted to announce the IFCC Scholarship Program, which will support young scientists in attending the EuroMedLab Congress in Brussels in May 2025. This program also includes support for the 4th Edition of the IFCC FORUM for Young Scientists.

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I would like to remind you that nominations are now open for the IFCC Distinguished Awards. These awards honor exceptional achievements in clinical chemistry, laboratory medicine, and related disciplines. By recognizing ground-breaking research, diagnostic innovations, and other significant contributions, the awards highlight the impact of laboratory professionals on scientific advancement and healthcare improvement. These prestigious awards, the highest honors conferred by the IFCC, are sponsored by our corporate partners, who generously fund this initiative.

The 2024 Fall Call for PEP applications has concluded, and the applications are under evaluation. This program continues to offer several scholarships each year, facilitating professional exchange programs to support the training of young scientists and the continuing education of laboratory professionals worldwide.

Please mark your calendars for Global MedLab Week (GMLW), April 21–27, 2025. The theme is "Labs Save Lives!". This annual event celebrates the vital contributions of laboratory medicine professionals. We encourage you to actively participate by organizing activities or sharing creative content, such as podcasts, videos, or photos, to showcase the life-saving impact of laboratory work. The Committee on Public Relations will provide detailed guidelines in due course.
The IFCC is proud of its LIVE WEBINAR Series, which has attracted between 2,500 and 5,000 attendees per session from over 160 countries since its launch in 2020. These complimentary webinars, which include certificates of attendance, provide global access to expert knowledge. The call for proposals for the 2025 IFCC Webinar Program has closed, and the submitted topics are under review. I extend my gratitude to all Functional Units, Regional Federations, and National Societies for their valuable contributions. Each 90-minute webinar features three expert speakers and a panel discussion. Additionally, IFCC Awards Committee (EB-AC) is developing a webinar accreditation program to further enhance the quality of these sessions, reinforcing its commitment to leadership in laboratory medicine education.

Your participation in the IFCC activities is crucial, and there are several ways to contribute. One key avenue is through IFCC surveys. Currently, there are two open surveys you are encouraged to complete:

- Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR)
- Use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Tools in Clinical Laboratories

With a significant decision, the IFCC Executive Board has approved elevating the ETD Working Group on Artificial Intelligence and Genomic Diagnostics (WG-AIGD), chaired by Dr. Sarina Yang (US), to become the Committee on Artificial Intelligence in Laboratory Medicine (C-AILM). Artificial intelligence is an emerging technology expected to play a pivotal role in laboratory medicine. By exploring its applications, scope, accessibility, and limitations, IFCC is preparing for AI's integration into medical and laboratory practices.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all my colleagues who have supported me and contributed immensely to the remarkable progress of the IFCC. Your dedication and commitment are truly appreciated.

As the holiday season approaches, I extend my warmest wishes to all my dear colleagues and friends. May your Christmas be filled with joy, and may the New Year bring you happiness, good health, peace, and prosperity.

With my best regards

Prof. Dr Tomris Ozben

IFCC President

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# IFCC Abbott Visiting Lecture Programme (VLP): PCQACL Congress 08–10 Oct 2024, at Quezon City Philippines

By **Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dabla,** Department of Biochemistry, G.B.Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (GIPMER), Associated Maulana Azad Medical College, GNCTD, Delhi, India

**October 8-11, 2024, in Quezon City, Phillippines:** The Philippine Council for Quality Assurance in Clinical Laboratories (PCQACL) Congress, gathered laboratory professionals in order to elevate clinical diagnostics standards nationwide. Quezon City, Philippines, blends vibrant urban culture with lush green spaces. Known for its lively dining places, historic landmarks, and the expansive Quezon Memorial Circle, it's a hub for arts, entertainment, and a rich fusion of Filippino heritage. This year's congress featured expert-led workshops, lectures sessions on laboratory accreditation, quality management, and the latest diagnostic innovations. With a focus on advancing patient care, sessions explored regulatory compliance, lab error prevention, and optimized laboratory practices. Attendees gained critical insights into cutting-edge quality assurance techniques, strengthening the Philippines' laboratory capabilities to meet global standards and ensure safer, more accurate diagnostics across healthcare settings.

Attending the PCQACL Congress was a fulfilling experience being present and meeting with healthcare professionals to discuss critical advancements in the field. The keynote presentation on "Mobile Health Technologies and Sustainability" showcased innovative mobile solutions that enhance patient care while promoting environmental responsibility. Participants learned how these technologies can be applied for patient care benefit in healthcare to improve healthcare efficiency. The plenary session, "Total Quality Management of Medical and Molecular Laboratories," emphasized the significance of TQM principles in laboratory practices while sharing strategies for optimizing laboratory performance, fostering continuous improvement, and ensuring regulatory compliance. Overall, the congress provided valuable insights into integrating technology and quality management to elevate healthcare standards and enhance patient outcomes. Heartfelt thanks to the IFCC VLP program and the PCQACL office for this congress visit.

*Dr Pradeep Dabla*

*Dr Pradeep Dabla and dr Gouget, at PCQACL in Manila*

*Dr Pradeep Dabla Awarded at PCQACL in Manila (PH)*

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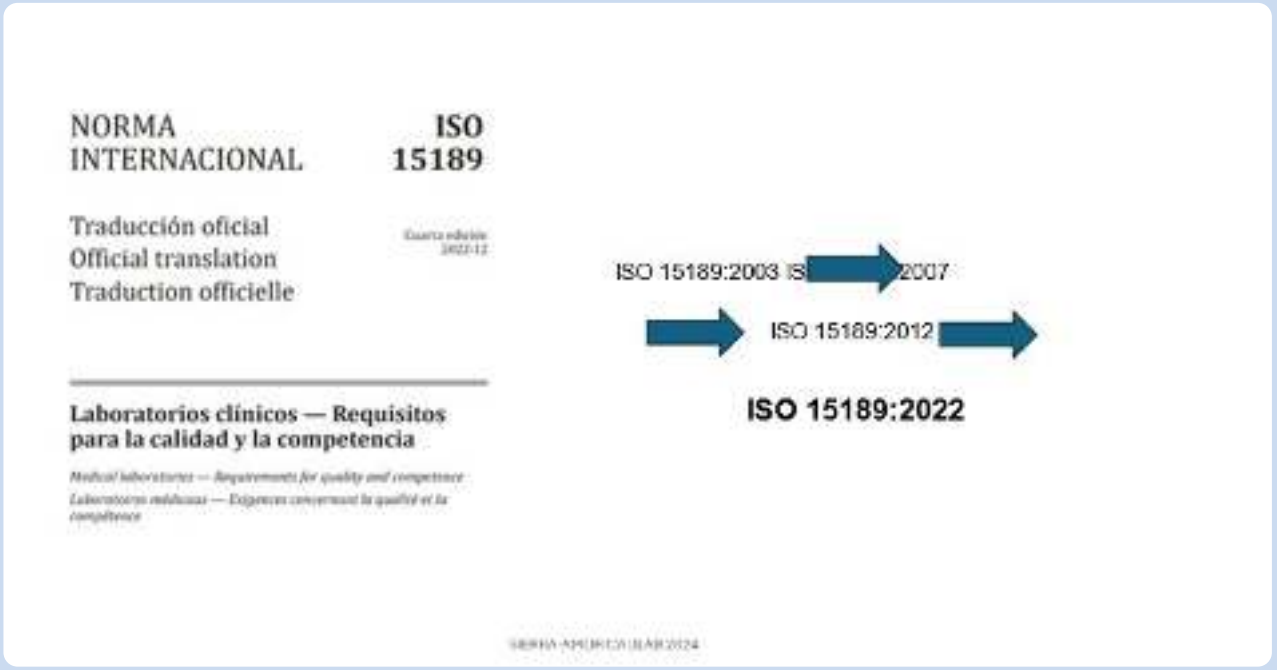
# IFCC-Abbott Visiting Lecture Programme (VLP) at CALILAB 2024 Congress, November 6–8, 2024 at the Buenos Aires Convention Center

By **Dr Rosa Sierra-Amor,** PhD (Mexico)

I recently visited Buenos Aires, Argentina to participate as IFCC-Abbott VLP Lecturer in the CALILAB 2024 Congress that took place from November 6-8, 2024 at the Buenos Aires Convention Center.

My activities included a lecture at the Dr. Norberto Cabutti Conference, entitled: **"Acreditación: un enfoque retrospectivo hacia un futuro de mejora continua en el laboratorio"** or **"Accreditation: A Retrospective Approach to a Future of Continuous Improvement in the Laboratory".**
This conference was held on Wednesday November 6th, from 15:45 to 16:40 hours, an activity that was part of the scientific program prior to the Opening ceremony that same day. There were close to 200 people, mostly clinical chemists, biochemists, graduate students, and other professionals from Argentina, but also from other countries in South America. This conference was dedicated to Dr Norberto Cabutti who initiated the accreditation process in Argentina in 2005; he was also president of COLABIOCLI in the late 90´s. The topic of the conference was a review of the ISO 15189 international standard on accreditation that has been updated in the past, but now the most recent version from 2022, is also in Spanish and in French. This time the ISO 15189 in Spanish was translated by a TF formed with the intention to harmonize the language, and where stake holders from several Spanish speaking countries in Latin America, and from Spain and the UK participated. The audience could understand how ISO 15189 has addressed different requirements according to the needs of the laboratory, medical staff and health care authorities.




On Friday, November 8th, I gave a two-hour intra-congress Workshop on Quality Management, entitled: **Importancia de los parámetros de Calidad en el laboratorio clinico / Importance of Quality Parameters in the Clinical Laboratory.**
At this workshop, there were about 40 colleagues from Argentina, and from Paraguay and Costa Rica. Some represented already accredited laboratories, others were initiating the process or were certified laboratories based on ISO 9001, and few less have no knowledge of the quality requirements to initiate the accreditation process according to ISO 15189. There were comments raised during

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the workshop, mostly related to how their laboratories have improved in quality over the years. The attendees were from health care organizations, private laboratories, industry and universities.

During the congress I had the opportunity to meet Prof. Tomris Ozben, and several other IFCC EB members who lectured at this important meeting. I also had the opportunity to meet with Dr Eduardo Freggiaro, president of the congress, president of FBA and COLABIOCLI regional representative, and with Prof. Nilda Fink, chair of the scientific program at CALILAB 2024, and I would like to thank them very much, because they made my stay in Buenos Aires a very pleasant one, but also for their caring and friendship.

I thank the IFCC VLP Programme for the opportunity to lecture at the CALILAB 2024 Congress.

https://calilab.fba.org.ar/index.php/programa-cientifico-2024/

*Dr Rosa Sierra Amor during her speech*

*A group of invited speakers at CALILAB*

*(L-R) Prof Ozben, IFCC President, Dr Sierra Amor, VLP Lecturer, Dr Fink, chair of the scientific program at CALILAB 2024*

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# IFCC Abbott Visiting Lecture Programme (VLP): attending the XXVI Latin American Congress on Clinical Biochemistry, Cartagena (Colombia)

By **Dr. Federico Remes Lenicov,** Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas en Retrovirus y SIDA (INBIRS) UBA - CONICET, Facultad de Medicina, UBA, Paraguay 2155 - C1121ABG, CABA - Argentina

I am extremely grateful to the IFCC-Abbott Visiting Lecturer Program for their support, which made it possible for me to attend the XXVI Latin American Congress on Clinical Biochemistry, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from October 3rd to 6th, 2024.
The event, superbly organized by COLABIOCLI and Colombia's National College of Bacteriologists (CNB), encompassed all aspects of laboratory medicine. It featured state-of-the-art presentations and provided numerous opportunities to discuss the challenges facing our profession. In every respect, the congress exceeded expectations, from participant engagement and the quality of the talks to the social events designed to foster networking.

**My Participation**
As a member of COLABIOCLI's Bioethics Working Group, I was invited to participate in the session on Ethics and Research. My first talk, "Ethical Dilemmas on the Use of Remnant Samples in Clinical Laboratories", focused on the ethical considerations involved in managing leftover samples, a common scenario in clinical practice. My second presentation, "Professional Ethics in the HIV Diagnostic Laboratory", addressed the ethical challenges posed by the current people-centered strategies in combating the HIV epidemic.
In both talks, I aimed to emphasize that understanding the ethical dimensions of our work is crucial to fulfilling the clinical laboratory's role in healthcare.
A welcome surprise followed the ethics session: colleagues from Colombia, Peru, and Panama expressed interest in joining COLABIOCLI's Bioethics Working Group, expanding the group's reach and collaboration.

**Beyond Ethics**
In addition to my sessions, I had the pleasure of attending several presentations from experts on topics ranging from quality management to public health and the use of artificial intelligence. A session that particularly stood out to me was one highlighting the importance of outcome studies in demonstrating the clinical utility of our work.
Finally, I would like to highlight that my experience at the congress was made even more memorable by the organizers' hospitality and the warmth of the beautiful city of Cartagena, leaving me with lasting memories of both the professional and personal connections formed.

*Dr. Federico Remes Lenicov presenting his first talk: "Ethical Dilemmas on the Use of Remnant Samples in Clinical Laboratories" at COLABIOCLI Congress*

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# IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Program (PSEP): my experience at St. Luc Clinical Hospital, Brussels, Belgium

By **Josipa Raguž**, Croatia

**IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Program (PSEP): my experience at St. Luc Clinical Hospital, Brussels, Belgium**

As a young European specialist in laboratory medicine (EUSpLM), continuous professional development is essential for me to keep up with the evolving standards and technological advancements in our field. I had the privilege to participate in the IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Program (PSEP) and spent two months at Saint-Luc Clinical Hospital in Brussels, Belgium, under the mentorship of Prof. Damien Gruson, an expert in cardiac biomarkers. This experience has significantly contributed to my professional growth, both scientifically and in laboratory practice.

Saint-Luc Clinical Hospital is the largest hospital in Brussels, known for its excellence in patient care and a strong partnership with the Université Catholique de Louvain. The hospital has achieved full AAHRPP accreditation, demonstrating its commitment to ethical standards in clinical research. The Clinical biochemistry department, headed by Professor Damien Gruson, specializes in hormone analysis and immunoassays, making it an ideal setting for my training.

The first month involved an introduction to the laboratory's advanced automation systems and workflows. I observed the pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical phases, gaining insights into how automated systems improve efficiency and accuracy in lab operations.
Under the guidance of Professor Gruson, I was introduced to the latest developments in cardiac biomarker research and had the opportunity to contribute to method evaluations, specifically the comparison between the NT-proBNP and CA125 assays on the Maglumi X6 analyzer and the Cobas e602.

This process of analytical verification and comparing methods provided me a deeper understanding of quality control measures and the importance of harmonizing laboratory techniques. Such knowledge is essential for ensuring consistent and reliable results across different healthcare systems.

In the second month, I extended my analytical work to include CA125 testing. After verifying analytical performance on the Maglumi X6 and comparison with Cobas e602, I engaged in research on CA125's clinical applications in heart failure, exploring its potential value in clinical decision-making beyond its traditional use as a tumor marker. This project offered valuable insights into the broader utility of CA125 in cardiac biomarker profiling.

I plan to utilize the knowledge and skills gained to enhance the operations and services at my home laboratory, "Medical-biochemical laboratory Ljerka Sablek" in Požega, Croatia.

I would like to give my special thanks to the IFCC for this great opportunity, as well as to the Croatian society of medical biochemistry and laboratory medicine, headed by Associate Professor Ivana Ćelap, for their support. I am especially grateful to Professor Damien Gruson and the entire team at Saint-Luc for their mentorship. My dear friend and colleague Tara Rolić also played a great role in my application for PSEP, by sharing her experience and encouraging me, also introducing me to IFCC TF Young Scientists. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge my mother and my mentor, colleague, and chief, Ljerka Sablek for her unconditional support and guidance. I encourage all colleagues worldwide to consider this exceptional opportunity. I look forward to sharing my insights and contributing to future scientific publications.

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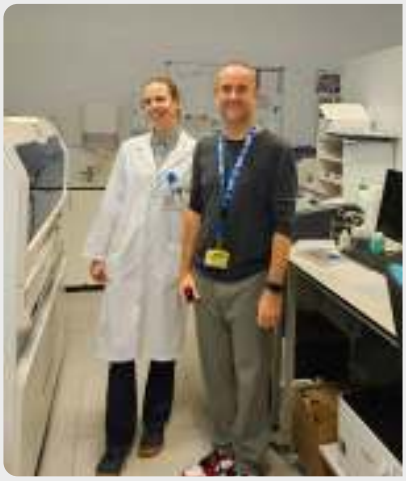

*With my mentor, Prof. Damien Gruson, head of the Clinical Biochemistry Department, Saint-Luc Clinical Hospital, Brussels, Belgium*

*Enjoying nice moments in Brussels*

*My ID at the Saint-Luc Clinical Hospital in Brussels*

The On Demand content is available here

# IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Program: my experience at G.B. Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (GIPMER), Govt of New Delhi, India

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By **Ozioma Ebere Obianyido,** PhD. Clinical Chemistry (Final year), Lecturer at the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences and Technology, College of Medicine, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nigeria

I spent three months of robust academic and research experience at the G.B. Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (GIPMER), Govt of New Delhi, India, through the IFCC Professional Exchange Program. GIPMER is a leading super-specialty hospital focusing strongly on cardiology, gastroenterology, neurosurgery, and residency training programs. The institution has state-of-the-art automated laboratory instruments supporting clinical and research activities.

During my training, I actively participated in three areas: clinical laboratory, academic, and research. In the clinical laboratory, I gained hands-on experience in immunoassay techniques, routine clinical chemistry analysis, and coagulation studies using advanced instruments such as the ROCHE cobas e 411, ROCHE cobas 6000/501, and ACL TOP 350$^{CTS}$, respectively. At the Multidisciplinary Research Unit (MRU) of Maulana Azad Medical College, I gained hands-on experience in molecular techniques, from RNA extraction to real-time PCR. I also observed flow cytometry and GCMS.

Academically, I participated in the departmental postgraduate seminars, and I presented two topics:

1. *Heavy Metal Exposure and the Risk of Cardiovascular Disease Development*
2. *From RNA Extraction to Real-Time PCR: My Observations*

In addition, I attended two valuable workshops:

1. *Good Clinical Laboratory Practice* organized by the Department of Biochemistry, Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute, University of Delhi, where I explored the fundamental principles and guidelines for ensuring the quality and integrity of laboratory data.
2. *Clinical Utility of Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in Haematology,* organized by the Association of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine Practitioners (ACCLMP), where I explored the potential of artificial intelligence to revolutionize the diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of haematological disorders.

Regarding the research component, I contributed to an observational study in cardiovascular research. Data collection is complete, and analysis is underway. We aim to publish our findings in the *eJournal IFCC.*

The IFCC professional exchange program has provided me with intensive exposure to advanced technologies, equipping me to generate rigorously validated research outcomes suitable for publication and future grant proposals. Additionally, I have cultivated essential collaborative networks that are pivotal for my clinical chemistry and cardiovascular research progression. The expertise I have gained will enhance my effectiveness in delivering lectures and supervising research projects.

I am deeply grateful to the IFCC for providing this invaluable opportunity. I express my profound gratitude to my host and mentor, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dabla, Professor of Biochemistry, Department of Biochemistry at the G.B. Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (GIPMER) New Delhi, India. I am equally thankful to the faculty members, residents, and staff for their outstanding mentorship and support. Their insights and expertise have enriched my clinical chemistry and cardiovascular research understanding. I sincerely appreciate Prof. Bashiru Okesina, Prof Ernest Onwasoigwe, Prof. Joy Ebele Ikekpeazu, Prof. Silas Ufele, and Dr. Hector Obianyido for their recommendations and unwavering support, which were instrumental in facilitating this visit.

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With Prof Dr. Ritu Singh, Head, Department of Biochemistry, Lady Haringe Medical College during the pre-conference CME on Holistic Diagnosis of Hemoglobinopathies.

With Faculty members staff and residents of G.B. Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education Research (GIPMER) affiliated with Maulana Azad Medical College

With my Host Dr Pradeep Kumar Dabla Professor of Biochemistry, G.B. Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education Research (GIPMER) affiliated with Maulana Azad Medical College

With staff and Residents at the Good laboratory Practice workshop

With staff of Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi, India

Me Working in the Laboratory

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# IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Programme : My Experience at Laboratory Medicine Department of Shinshu University Hospital, Nagano, Japan

By **Tandry Meriyanti**, MD, Clinical Pathologist, Siloam Hospitals Lippo Village, Banten, Indonesia
Email: tandry.meriyanti@siloamhospitals.com

My name is Tandry Meriyanti, clinical pathologist at Siloam Hospitals Lippo Village and lecturer at Pelita Harapan University, Banten, Indonesia. I had a great opportunity from IFCC – Professional Scientific Exchange Programme (PSEP) to visit Laboratory Medicine Department of Shinshu University Hospital at Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, Japan from 9th September – 11th October 2024.

Laboratory Medicine Department of Shinshu University Hospital is a center equipped with advanced facilities, including Diagnostic Pathology, Clinical Pathology, Genetic and Genomic Laboratory, Blood Transfusion Center, Advanced Cell Therapy Center, known for CAR-T cell therapy, and certified by ISO 15189 accreditation to ensure the laboratory quality. The laboratory team consists of highly qualified professionals dedicated and experienced in their sections.

Through this programme, I learnt about genetic and genomic testing from preparing the specimen, performing the test and analysing the result. For specimen preparation, I learnt from the very beginning step to do the gross cutting for tissue specimen since this step is very important to acquire a good specimen despite the technology used for the test.

I explored many types of molecular and genetic testing such as PCR and Sanger sequencing, clonality test, cytogenetic test, HLA typing for hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, FISH, and NGS. During my stay, I had an opportunity to have a small project to do EWSR1 FISH probe performance check between EWSR1 break and EWSR1-FLI1 compared to PCR and Sanger sequencing of EWSR1. I learnt to prepare the specimen for FISH test, including Carnoy fixation and FFPE slide, stain the slide, and analyze the FISH result. I also performed DNA extraction, PCR and Sanger sequencing for EWSR1, and analyzed the result. I really appreciated the efforts to make me understand the detailed procedures and techniques, and how they shared their expertise generously so I can implement the procedures in my laboratory.

I also joined their pathology meeting every morning to discuss the difficult samples and attended their hospital genomic meeting. I loved their collaboration, working system, discipline and dedication to ensure the best practice for the patients.
Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to Takeshi Uehara, MD, PhD, as the director of Laboratory Medicine Department, who granted me the access to all of the laboratory facilities, Nau Ishimine, Ph.D, as technical supervisor of Laboratory Medicine Department, who supported me from the beginning of the application and always facilitated me during my stay in Japan, the genetic division team and the rest of the staff of Shinshu University Laboratory Medicine Department for their guidance and hospitality during this exchange programme. I would also like to thank the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC) and the Indonesian Association of Clinical Chemistry (IACC) for their support through the Professional Scientific Exchange Program (PSEP) scholarship.

This exchange program enriched my professional skills and promoted international collaboration. It has been an honour to be able to learn Japanese culture and also share my culture as Indonesia representative. I am enthusiastic about implementing this knowledge and experience to improve my laboratory practices and healthcare services in my institution and home country Indonesia.

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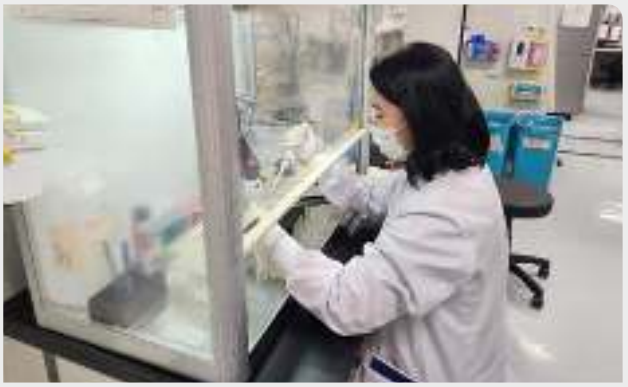
*Left to right : Nau Ishimine, PhD – Takeshi Uehara, MD, PhD – Tandry Meriyanti, MD – Mai Iwaya, MD, PhD – Saori Ueda*



*Tandry Meriyanti at Genetic Division of Laboratory Medicine Department Shinshu University Hospital*

*Tandry Meriyanti with Genetic Division Team*
*From the top left : Tomu Kamijo, PhD – Saori Konno, PhD – Wakaba Iha, BLS – Hitomi Imamura*
*From the bottom left : Tatsuya Negishi, PhD – Tandry Meriyanti, MD – Shohei Shigeto, PhD*

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# IFCC SD Satellite meeting, 8–9 November 2024 – Athens

By **Prof. dr. Christa Cobbaert,** Chair of the IFCC Scientific Division (SD)
In cooperation with **Konstantinos Makris,** SD Vice Chair, **Hubert Vesper,** SD Member and **Nikos Galiatsatos,** Congress President GSCC-CB, **Christos Tsatsanis,** Scientific Committee President GSCC-CB, **Evgenia Konsta,** Organizing Committee President GSCC-CB

This was the first time the IFCC Scientific Division had organized a collaborative meeting of this kind to inform the laboratory medicine community about mass spectrometry, an established technology that can overcome some of the challenges we face with current laboratory assays.

The primary objective of this event was to inform the community about the strengths and challenges of this new technology by providing information on current applications in areas such as endocrinology and to provide an outlook on potential future applications. As with all clinical laboratory activities, the quality of data produced is of utmost importance. Therefore, it was important to provide information about opportunities and challenges related to quality with this technology. It is good to see that people not only aim for new applications but also develop guidance documents and other means to make this technology work well on a practical basis.

As we heard, mass spectrometry clearly evolved from a niche technology for very special applications to mainstream technology with broad applications and use. We learned that it has the potential to go beyond what we are currently doing and provide new and more customized patient care.
Still, it remains a technology that requires a very high skill level, special laboratory infrastructure, and therefore is right now not affordable and feasible for many laboratories. Some may remember that we had a similar situation back then when immunoassays became popular.

It was the demand of the clinical laboratory community for better quality data that pushed innovation. Now with the dawn of getting new fully automated, closed mass spectrometry systems, I think we are getting closer for this technology to be more broadly used.

I think we learned that mass spectrometry is not the solution to everything and will not replace the technologies we have today in our laboratories, nor will it be the only new technology entering the clinical laboratory. As a profession, we need to make sure current and future clinical chemists have the appropriate knowledge and skills to use mass spectrometry in an appropriate and meaningful manner, whether it is an open research-type system or a fully automated, closed system.

With that, I hope this meeting was helpful not only to those familiar with mass spectrometry but more importantly to those new to this technology. I hope, the information provided helped you to be prepared for the new opportunities ahead of us in laboratory medicine.

*Dr Luise Luckau, who won the best presentation award in the Greek part of the symposium*

*IFCC SD satellite symposium organizers with some speakers from the interactive session in between.*

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# "Ethics in the spotlight" Workshop: Ethics in research and the clinical laboratory. The use of checklists.

By **Julian Verona,** PhD, IFCC Task Force on Ethics Member

Within the framework of the CALILAB congress that took place in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, from November 6 to 8, 2024, the workshop entitled "Ethics in research and the clinical laboratory. The use of checklists" was held.

The objective of the workshop was to provide colleagues who carry out clinical research or who work in the clinical field with practical tools that allow them to address fundamental ethical issues in their practice.

The agenda included the presentation and use of two checklists, one for clinical researchers and the other for clinical laboratory professionals. Both of them were recently developed by the IFCC Task Force on Ethics (PMID 38881198).

The workshop consisted of a series of videos containing the background necessary knowledge and four written hypothetical cases to be analyzed employing the checklists.

The session was an engaging and motivational experience that allowed the participants to work together and discuss ethical concerns.

*Speaker and IFCC Task Force on Ethics Member, Julian Verona presents a workshop on the use of ethical checklists.*

*A slide from the presentation "Ethics in research and the clinical laboratory. The use of checklists" by dr Verona*

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# New podcasts from the IFCC Committee on Clinical Application of Cardiac Biomarkers

*Two new podcasts have become available from the IFCC Committee on Clinical Application on Cardiac Biomarkers. In these podcasts Kristin M Aakre (Chair of the committee) is interviewing Professor Nicholas Mills who is an interventional cardiologist and a professor of cardiology from the University of Edinburgh (UK). Professor Mills has done groundbreaking studies in cardiovascular medicine, focusing particularly on the rapid diagnosis and treatment of acute coronary syndromes.*

*The "Educational podcast" (https://eacademy.ifcc.org/lessons/professor-nicholas-mills/) discusses biomarker implementation research. We discuss what implementation research is, what challenges and advantages this scientific design entails and what basic data must be in place before implementation studies may be performed. The podcast also includes some advice for those planning on conducting implementation research and rounds up discussing the future challenges of this field.*

*In the "Meet the experts - podcast" (https://eacademy.ifcc.org/lessons/professor-nicholas-mills-2/) Professor Mills talks about how he entered the field of cardiac biomarkers, why he finds this field particularly fascinating and encouraging, and how he balances his obligations as researcher with a busy clinical schedule as interventional cardiologist. He includes some advice for young researchers, and also looks into the crystal bowl regarding future opportunities and challenges in the field of cardiac biomarkers.*

*Professor Nicholas Mills, cardiologist and professor of cardiology from the University of Edinburgh (UK).*

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# IFCC Working Group Metabolomics webinar: The potential of metabolomics to tackle unmet clinical needs

By **Marie Lenski,** IFCC WG-M member, French specialist in laboratory medicine (Société Française de Biologie Cliniques SFBC), IFCC-Task Force Young Scientists member

The IFCC Working Group – Metabolomics (IFCC WG-M) is dedicated to assessing the applications of Metabolomics in clinical diagnosis and prognosis, and to assess the accessibility and the barriers to routine implementation of Metabolomics in clinical laboratories. In this objective, the working group presented a webinar on "The potential of metabolomics to tackle unmet clinical needs". Comprehensive metabolic profiling, using metabolomics, has become widely accepted as a dynamic and sensitive measure of the phenotype at the molecular level, placing the technology at the forefront of biomarker and mechanistic discoveries related to pathophysiological processes. Small molecule metabolites involved in cellular function, maintenance, differentiation, growth and death are of particular interest for biologists and clinicians as potential biomarkers of pathophysiological processes to facilitate disease diagnosis and prognosis (i.e, prediction of risk and/or disease progression). This webinar aimed to cover the applications of metabolomics leading future implementation in clinical routine. A particular emphasis was done on newborn screening and toxicology, as well as the recent advances in volatomics.

Dr Elie FUX, chair of the IFCC WG-M, moderated the webinar. He presented members of the IFCC working group on metabolomics, and some outstanding results from the survey leaded by the working group in 2023 and published in 2024 in CCLM (https://doi.org/10.1515/cclm-2024-0550).

Then, the webinar comprised of the following three presentations:

1. Metabolomics in inborn errors of metabolism

Prof David FRIEDECKY, is head of the Department of Clinical Biochemistry, University Hospital Olomouc, in Czech Republic. He presented the crucial role of mass spectrometry in clinical diagnostics for several decades. This technique has been successfully applied in the field of therapeutic monitoring, determination of selected biomarkers, toxicological screening or microbiology. Inherited metabolic disorders are also one of the widely studied areas where mass spectrometry plays a key role. Omics approaches at the metabolite and lipid level have then taken

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an important position in recent years, on the one hand in understanding pathobiochemistry and on the other hand in the discovery of new biomarkers. Both approaches have been successfully applied to a number of IMD in recent years. In this presentation, an overview of the use of metabolomics and lipidomics for the study of beta fatty acid oxidation disorders, peroxisomal disorders, mitochondrial disorders, hyperuricaemia and others was given. An untargeted metabolomic approach for routine diagnostic purposes was also presented.

2. The diagnostic properties of human volatilome

Prof Corrado DI NATALE is the director of the Interdepartmental Centre on Volatolomics at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy. He presented volatilomics as the branch of metabolomics interested in the detection of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). VOCs are defined as a group of low-molecular-weight, carbon-based molecules with low boiling points and high vapor pressure. VOCs can evaporate at ambient temperatures and encompass a wide range of chemical groups, including alcohols, ketones, aldehydes, hydrocarbons, terpenes, amines, isocyanates, and sulfides. Volatile samples from human subjects are often collected from sources such as breath, urine, blood, milk, skin, feces, and saliva, each emitting varying compositions of VOCs. There is mounting evidence that specific VOC signatures can be detected depending on diseases. Therefore, not only can VOCs be explored as a novel diagnostic method for distinguishing between different diseases, but their non-invasive methodology offers a distinct advantage in healthcare diagnostic applications. Prof Di Natale highlighted the methodology of volatilome analysis and illustrated the relationship between the volatilome and various diseases.

3. Metabolomics in biological and forensic toxicology

Dr Marie LENSKI is a young specialist in laboratory medicine working in the laboratory of toxicology at Lille University Hospital, France. This part of the webinar addressed the value of metabolomics as an innovative approach in biological and forensic toxicology to confirm an exposure and/or an effect and/or a toxicity due to xenobiotics, as well as to improve post-mortem interpretation of forensic situations. Indeed, through its ability to highlight changes in the overall metabolic profile and not of a single metabolite of interest, metabolomics presents itself as a promising tool for the elucidation of physiopathological mechanisms or even for the identification of new biomarkers. This potential was illustrated by several examples of unmet clinical need in toxicology, that could benefit from metabolomics, including 1) Prove acute drug consumption 2) Extend detection windows 3) Discriminate addiction from occasional consumers 4) Improve post-mortem interpretation of forensic situations. Thus, metabolomic approaches are a powerful complementary tool to those currently used in biological and forensic toxicology.

The webinar was attended by more than 1200 participants from different countries and regions, and positive feedback was received from the audience. The participants had the opportunity to interact with the speakers and ask questions during the panel discussion. The questions covered technical, clinical, and financial aspects of metabolomics in laboratory medicine. If you missed the webinar or want to watch it again, you can access the recording on demand here.

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# IFCC Calls for Nominations

Participate into IFCC activities and give your contribution! Review the open positions and, if interested, contact your National or Corporate Representative. Currently following call for nomination are open:

**Education and Management Division (EMD)**

- **Committee on Kidney Diseases (C-KD)**
  **1 member position -** see here the call for nominations
  Please send nominations for above position to Silvia Cardinale (cardinale@ifcc.org) by 10th January 2025

- **Committee on Education in the Use of Biomarkers in Diabetes (C-EUBD)**
  2 member position - see here the call for nominations
  Please send nominations for above positions to Silvia Cardinale (cardinale@ifcc.org) by 25th January 2025

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**Emerging Technologies Division (ETD)**

- **IFCC Committee on Artificial Intelligence (C-AILM)**
  4 members positions - see here the call for nominations
  Please send nominations for above positions to Silvia Colli Lanzi (colli-lanzi@ifcc.org) by 31st January 2025

For any further information on nominations, please refer to your National or Corporate Representative - contacts are available here.

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# Meet a Young Scientist from the IFCC Task Force Young Scientists

Spotlight on: **Ana Sofía DUARTE ACUNA,** IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from Guatemala, nominated by The Asociación de Químicos Biólogos de Guatemala (AQBG)

*Could you please introduce yourself?*
My name is Ana Sofía Duarte Acuña, and I live in Guatemala City, Guatemala, in Central America, where I reside with my family. I am deeply passionate about my work, particularly in advancing healthcare projects that provide quality services to patients. In my free time, I enjoy reading, painting, and exploring nature.

*Could you share a bit about your background?*
I graduated as a Biochemist/Medical Laboratory Professional from the University of San Carlos of Guatemala. I pursued a Postgraduate Degree in Quality Management and Good Laboratory Practices, as well as another in Molecular Biology and Genetics. My specialization is in Hematology, complemented by training in Immunology and Autoimmunity. Additionally, I hold an MSc in Food and Nutrition with a focus on food safety, which enables me to approach patient care from a more holistic perspective.

*What is your current role in the lab/daily activity?*
I currently serve as the Director of a private laboratory that primarily focuses on pediatric and family healthcare. Our facility covers all the essential diagnostic areas and includes some specialized services. In my role, I oversee both the administrative and technical aspects of the lab, collaborating closely with our medical team to ensure the highest standard of patient care. I am also actively involved in setting up and managing a non-profit foundation dedicated to providing quality healthcare to underserved patients.

*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
I am an active member of the Association of Biological Chemists of Guatemala (AQBG). For four years, I served as Secretary of the Board of Directors, and I continue to contribute to various national projects, particularly in the academic sphere. Last year, I played a key role in organizing the National Congress, where I coordinated the scientific program and secured the participation of both national and international experts. Currently, I am the National Representative and Coordinator of the COLABIOCLI Young Professionals Working Group, as well as a corresponding member of the IFCC Task Force - Young Scientists (TF-YS) since 2022.

*Can you highlight some of the key activities you have been involved with in the IFCC TF-YS?*
I was introduced to the group in 2018 through the Roche Scholarships, which enabled me to attend the IFCC Congress in Rome. After actively participating in various academic events, I was appointed a corresponding member in 2022. My involvement includes contributing to working group meetings and engaging young professionals from Latin America in initiatives like the “Meet My Lab” and “Global Med Week” projects. It has been immensely rewarding to facilitate the participation of young Latin American scientists and showcase their work on an international stage.

*Did you participate in any exchange programs during your career?*
Yes, I had the opportunity to participate in the IFCC Professional Scientific Exchange Programme (PSEP) from September 16 to December 8, 2022. I spent 12 weeks at Fares Taie Biotecnología in

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Mar del Plata, Argentina, focusing on Immunology and Autoimmunity. This experience was made possible through a scholarship, which allowed me to gain hands-on training in specific diagnostic techniques and methodologies. The program was invaluable in enhancing my analytical skills and expertise in clinical diagnostics, particularly in the interpretation and application of immunology and autoimmunity tests.
Autoimmune diseases are becoming increasingly prevalent globally, including in Guatemala. This underscores the need for highly trained professionals, and I am committed to developing new strategies to address emerging healthcare challenges.

*How can young scientists from your national society get more information about the association's activities and those of the TF-YS?*
It is crucial for national organizations to actively engage young professionals in their projects and initiatives, fostering their involvement in both national and international activities. Creating opportunities for knowledge exchange can significantly benefit the country.
I strongly believe in the need for a process of change and mentorship that empowers young professionals to take on leadership roles. In recent years, I've witnessed this transition not only in Guatemala but across Latin America, and I am thrilled to contribute to this positive movement.

*Is there any future collaborative project of the IFCC TF-YS that you would like to share with the readers of IFCC eNews?*
Absolutely. I am currently working with my team in Latin America to encourage young scientists to actively participate in the upcoming Global Med Week 2025. We plan to reach out to countries that currently lack a corresponding member in the IFCC TF-YS, inviting them to nominate a representative. This will help increase their engagement and visibility on the international stage.

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Spotlight on: **Dipuo Dephney MOTSHWARI**, IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from South Africa, nominated by the South African Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (SAACB)

*Could you please introduce yourself and share a bit about your background?*
My name is Dipuo Dephney Motshwari, and I am a second-year postdoctoral fellow at the SAMRC/CPUT Cardiometabolic Health Research Unit within the Biomedical Sciences department at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. My research focuses on leveraging epigenetic modifications as novel, affordable, and population-specific diagnostic and prognostic tools to facilitate the early diagnosis and prevention of non-communicable diseases, particularly chronic kidney disease (CKD), in Africa. To this end, I have joined a consortium dedicated to addressing the burden of CKD across the continent. Major deliverables of this undertaking include pooling individual participant data from CKD studies conducted throughout Africa to enable more accurate estimations of the CKD burden, creating resources such as an online data repository for tracking CKD, and facilitating CKD burden projections for the continent. The driving force behind my research is the double burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases affecting our communities in Africa, which places immense strain on our health systems and resources. I believe that the research projects I am involved in will positively contribute to improving healthcare delivery in our resource-limited communities.

*What is your current role in the lab?*
In my current role, my daily activities are dynamic and encompass a range of tasks, including conducting various experiments (nucleic acid extraction, reverse transcription, and qPCR), supervising undergraduate and postgraduate students, providing laboratory training, and writing research papers. The wet laboratory experiments I conduct aim to identify epigenetic changes linked to the development and/or progression of CKD. Critical aspects of my laboratory workflow involve the development, troubleshooting, and optimization of lab procedures while maintaining the highest quality standards for reliable results. As the project manager for my postdoctoral research project, I oversee data management, analysis, interpretation, and the dissemination of results through scientific writing for publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at local and international forums.

*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
I am a member of the South African Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (SAACB) and represent the African Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (AFCC) as the Chairperson of the Young Scientist Forum (YSF). The AFCC YS Forum is a newly established initiative aimed at empowering a diverse and inclusive group of young African scientists by facilitating professional development, knowledge exchange, and collaboration in the field of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine. We held our inaugural AFCC YS Forum at the 7th AFCC Conference in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2024. Following that, we conducted a virtual survey to understand the challenges faced by young scientists in Africa and identify key focus areas to address their needs. We also host monthly webinars on various topics, including scientific writing for publication, the influence of artificial intelligence in healthcare systems in Africa, clinical genetic testing, industry opportunities, and professional management. In 2025, we plan to maintain our current initiatives while incorporating more interactive activities to foster engagement among young scientists at regional and global levels. Further communications about these plans will be shared via our WhatsApp group (https://chat.whatsapp.com/IIroseb6TVw5sig2PAYmcv) and our social media pages on X (@afcc_ysf) and Instagram (afcc_ysf).

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*Can you highlight some of the key activities that you had with the IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists?*
I have participated in various initiatives organized by the IFCC TF-YS, with my favorite being the Youth Forums at the IFCC WorldLab Conferences, particularly the first one in Seoul, South Korea. These forums have provided me with a valuable platform to network with young professionals globally and form international collaborations. One IFCC TF-YS initiative I would like to attend is an international conference dedicated to young scientists, through collaboration with other regional task forces.

*Did you participate in an exchange program in your career?*
Yes, I am currently engaged in a three-month professional scientific exchange program at the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, from October to December 2024. During this period, I will receive training on cutting-edge technologies and methods used in clinical biochemistry diagnostic laboratories, gaining hands-on experience in specimen processing, quality control assessment, POCT, immunology testing, nephrology-related diagnostics, and mass spectrometry. This program will enhance my research, technical, and management skills while facilitating valuable international collaborations. Additionally, the knowledge and skills acquired during my visit will not only contribute to my career advancement but will also be shared with my colleagues upon my return, benefiting our overall research capabilities.

*How can Young Scientists from your national society get additional information about the activities of the association and activities with the IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists?*
Young scientists in our national society and the AFCC can contact me via email at dmotshwari@gmail.com or reach out through our AFCC YS WhatsApp group (https://chat.whatsapp.com/IIroseb6TVw5sig2PAYmcv) and our social media pages on X (@afcc_ysf) and Instagram (afcc_ysf), where we post updates about upcoming activities and opportunities.

Spotlight on: **Vivek PANT,** IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from Nepal, nominated by the Nepalese Association for Clinical Chemistry (NACC)

*Could you please introduce yourself?*
I'm Dr. Vivek Pant, the Research Director and a Consultant Biochemist at Samyak Diagnostic Laboratory in Nepal. My work combines research, diagnostics, and a passion for scientific writing, which I enjoy using to share knowledge and insights within the medical community. In my personal time I love cooking and hiking.

*Could you share a bit about your background?*
I earned my MBBS from the Kathmandu University in 2012 and then worked as a Medical Officer in the Emergency Department at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital. My interest in biomarkers for disease diagnosis motivated me to pursue an MD in Clinical Chemistry at the same institution.

*What is your current role in the lab?*
In my role within the clinical laboratory, I verify test results, assess them in the context of patients' clinical histories, and provide interpretative comments to clinicians. I handle inquiries regarding test selection, resolve laboratory discrepancies, and conduct accredited training programs on quality management systems. Additionally, I develop and update curricula to ensure alignment with new tests, guidelines, and accreditation standards. As the head of research, I lead research activities within the laboratory and engage in interinstitutional collaborations, addressing queries related to laboratory research from both domestic and international medical communities.

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*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
I am a member of the Nepalese Association for Clinical Chemistry (NACC), where we recently held our annual meeting, the details of which were published in the IFCC eNews. I am actively involved in promoting the participation of young members in our society's initiatives, conducting national surveys and webinars, and collaborating with other medical societies to establish laboratory guidelines. Furthermore, I work with various organizations representing NACC to emphasize the significance of laboratory medicine in healthcare.

*Did you participate in an exchange program in your career?*
Yes, participating in an exchange program through the IFCC has been one of the highlights of my career. I was fortunate to receive a Professional Scientific Exchange Program scholarship from the IFCC, which allowed me to visit the hormone laboratory at Oslo University Hospital in 2022. There, I learned the fundamentals of liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry. This experience not only helped me develop new skills in a different environment but also inspired me to pursue collaborative studies and explore ways to bring this technology to Nepal.

*How can YS from your national society get additional information about the activities of the association and activities with the TF-YS?*
To enhance the involvement of YS from developing nations like Nepal, increased IFCC Visiting Lecturer Programs would be very beneficial. Additionally, sharing promotional videos and academic content from laboratory settings in developing nations on the IFCC platform—similar to initiatives like Global Lab Week—could increase engagement. Providing special issues in the official IFCC journal that feature research from developing countries, as well as promoting inter-country interaction programs for young scientists would also help foster connections and collaboration.

Spotlight on: **Jorge HERNÁNDEZ BELLO**, IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from Mexico, nominated by the Colegio Mexicano de Ciencias del Laboratorio Clínico (CMCLabC)

*Could you please introduce yourself?*
I am Jorge Hernández Bello, an enthusiastic researcher with a deep passion for immunogenetics. I have dedicated my career to exploring the immune system's genetic underpinnings and advancing clinical laboratory sciences.

*Could you share a bit about your background?*
I hold a degree as a Chemical Biologist Parasitologist from the Autonomous University of Guerrero and a Ph.D. in Human Genetics from the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, with a doctoral research stay at the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Lisbon, Portugal. As a National Researcher (Level 2) and a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences, my research has primarily focused on autoimmune diseases. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I shifted some of my focus to investigating vaccine effectiveness, studying reactogenicity, and monitoring and characterizing viral variants in Mexico. Over the years, I have published more than 60 scientific articles, two books, and five book chapters.

*What is your current role in the lab/daily activity?*
I am a full-time professor-researcher at the University of Guadalajara's Health Sciences Center (CUCS) and currently serve as the General Coordinator of Postgraduate Programs at CUCS. My daily activities involve teaching medical students and Ph.D. candidates in biomedicine, guiding them through research processes, and fostering critical scientific inquiry. My research is primarily focused on identifying new serum and genetic biomarkers in autoimmune diseases and assessing the effectiveness of various treatments. This work, combined with my teaching, allows me to contribute to both the

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academic and clinical fields.

*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
The Colegio Mexicano de Ciencias del Laboratorio Clínico (CMCLabC) is dedicated to advancing clinical laboratory science in Mexico. It supports professional development through educational events, standardization of laboratory practices, and networking opportunities for members. The CMCLabC is committed to promoting excellence in laboratory services and supporting research to benefit public health in Mexico.

*Can you highlight some of the key activities that you had with the IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists?*
Together with Sofía Duarte (TF-YS corresponding member from Guatemala) and Santiago Fares Taie, the Chair of TF-YS, we have promoted IFCC activities among young scientists across Latin America, encouraging the formation of working groups in each country. Through our work with the Latin American Confederation of Clinical Biochemistry (COLABIOCLI), we have organized annual in-person meetings in different countries, along with frequent conferences and discussion panels. I am especially grateful to COLABIOCLI for their strong support of young scientists, which has allowed us to actively participate in these initiatives and grow our professional community across Latin America.

*Did you participate in an exchange program in your career?*
Yes, my doctoral stay at the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Lisbon was a transformative experience.

*How can Young Scientists from your national society get additional information about the activities of the association and activities with the TF-YS?*
Young Scientists in Mexico can access information through the official communications of the CMCLabC and the IFCC's website. They are also encouraged to join CMCLabC events where international opportunities and resources from IFCC and the TF-YS are highlighted. Additionally, they can stay updated through our dedicated social media channels, such as the Facebook page of the Young Professionals group of COLABIOCLI, which regularly shares information on resources, events, and ongoing projects to support young professionals in clinical laboratory sciences.

*Is there any future collaborative project of IFCC TF-YS that you want to share with readers of IFCC eNews?*
We are currently working on a comprehensive project to facilitate virtual workshops and seminars aimed at the professional growth of young scientists worldwide. This initiative not only aims to reduce geographical barriers and provide equitable access to training but also aligns with our mission to strengthen Latin America as a unified region in clinical laboratory sciences. Each TF-YS corresponding member in Latin America is committed to creating and supporting national working groups, fostering a cohesive regional network, and promoting greater international participation. We are developing a strategic agenda that includes leadership courses and continuous education on cutting-edge topics in laboratory sciences. Through this collaborative approach, we hope to build a strong foundation for future leaders and innovators in our field.

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Spotlight on: **Tatiana KUZNETSOVA**, IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from Russia, nominated by The Association of Laboratory Specialists and Organizations «The Federation of Laboratory Medicine» (FLM)

*Could you please introduce yourself?*
I am Tatiana Kuznetsova. My primary place of work is the Laboratory of Clinical Immunology at the Sklifosovsky Research Institute for Emergency Medicine in Moscow. I currently work there as a Doctor of Clinical Laboratory diagnostics. I was also fortunate to become an assistant in the Department of the Russian Medical Academy of Continuing Professional Education. This position allows me to meet interesting people and make valuable connections.

*Could you share a bit about your background?*
My career in laboratory medicine began several years ago after graduation. Since then, I have specialized in flow cytometry. Previously, I worked at Botkin Hospital with patients diagnosed with oncohematological diseases. My primary responsibilities involved identifying and enumerating stem cells in mobilized whole blood and apheresis products, as well as detecting and monitoring minimal residual disease in acute myeloid leukemia and plasma cell myeloma.

*What is your current role in the lab?*
Currently I am applying my knowledge of flow cytometry to patients with sepsis. My daily duties also include consulting with doctors and patients on the interpretation of test results and validating the results of biochemical and immunological tests.

*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
The Federation of Laboratory Medicine is the largest professional association for laboratory medicine specialists, manufacturers, and distributors of laboratory diagnostic equipment and medical supplies. Our national society's primary aim is the active participation of the professional community in improving the healthcare system of the Russian Federation. Our activities include: The Russian Congress on Medical Microbiology and Infectiology; Several regional forums: Volga, Siberian, and North Caucasus Regional Forums of Laboratory Medicine Specialists; The All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference of the Department of KLD of the Russian Academy of Sciences; The Russian Congress of Laboratory Medicine; The Clinical and Laboratory Forum of Laboratory Medicine Specialists.

*Can you highlight some of the key activities that you had with the IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists?*
I joined TF-YS in 2023 and have since had the opportunity to participate in webinars and invite young scientists to conferences in Russia. I am also happy to prepare a Clinical Case Study. In the future, I would like to participate in the next YS forum in Brussels.

*How can YS from your national society get additional information about the activities of the association and activities with the TF-YS?*
The website of The Federation of Laboratory Medicine provides extensive information about the Association's activities and collaborations with TF-YS. We regularly inform students and postgraduates about the opportunities for cooperation with IFCC.

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Spotlight on: **Tara ROLIC**, IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists corresponding member from Croatia, nominated by The Croatian Society of medical biochemistry and laboratory medicine

*Could you please introduce yourself?*
I work at the Institute of Clinical Laboratory Diagnostics in Osijek, where I hold a permanent position in the Department of Emergency Laboratory Medicine and Analytical Toxicology. My role involves overseeing toxicology screenings and confirming analyses through GCMS. I am also responsible for total laboratory process in managing analytical methods and confirming laboratory results with a particular focus on thyroid diseases, sex hormones, tumor markers, and for emergency patient's general chemistry, hematology, urinalysis, and coagulation. Every day presents new challenges as I work with diverse patients and encounter a variety of unique cases. My PhD research explores altered iron metabolism in cancer, with a particular focus on colorectal cancer. I'm also interested in the connection between dietary patterns and the incidence and progression of colorectal cancer, making my work highly interdisciplinary. I'm actively involved in several projects with the Croatian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and I am a representative within the Croatian Chamber in Medical Biochemistry. Additionally, I participate in European (EFLM) and international (IFCC) committees, particularly in promotion, publications, and young scientist initiatives. I'm especially proud of the EULabDay project, which promotes the visibility and role of laboratory medicine professionals to the public through activities like open-door days in labs. Traveling and spending time with family and friends are essential ways for me to recharge. With my busy schedule, it's rewarding to take time out and connect with loved ones.

*Could you share a bit about your background?*
I hold a master of science degree in medical biochemistry.

*What is your current role in the lab?*
My daily activities in the laboratory are diverse and depend on the nature of the day. On regular working days, I oversee the entire laboratory process carried out by laboratory technicians, from pre-analytical to analytical and post-analytical stages. This includes managing errors, ensuring quality control (both internal and external), and approving laboratory results for clinicians and patients. In addition to this, I handle projects that require laboratory assessments and measurements. When working in the emergency laboratory, I take on 16- or 24-hour shifts, during which I am responsible for laboratory results for critically ill patients.

*Could you give us a brief introduction to your national society and its main activities?*
The Croatian Society of Medical Biochemists and Laboratory Medicine (CSMBLM) was founded in 1953 as a non-profit association for medical biochemists. With over 750 members, including specialists and researchers, CSMBLM is a full member of the IFCC and EFLM. It publishes Biochemia Medica, a peer-reviewed journal indexed in major databases. CSMBLM also conducts regular external quality assessments of medical biochemistry laboratories in Croatia and organizes various professional events, including symposia and congresses. At the CSMBLM, I currently chair the working group for semen analysis, with the goal of creating guidelines for this subject. Previously, I have been involved in the Promotion and Publication Committee, organized LabDay events, and served as a member of the Organizing committee for the 10th National Congress.

*Can you highlight some of the key activities that you had with the IFCC Task Force-Young Scientists?*
I am delighted to be a part of the IFCC TF-YS, having first met the group in Munich and later at the first YS Forum in Seoul, Korea, where we had an excellent time sharing our professional and scientific

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journeys. Since then, I've had the opportunity to connect with even more amazing young scientists in Rome and Dubai. I encourage my young colleagues from Croatia to get involved, participate in YS webinars, present case reports, develop digital competencies, and engage in the many wonderful projects that YS is leading.

*Did you participate on an exchange program in your career?*
Yes, I had the privilege of participating in an exchange program at Oslo University Hospital in Norway, where I had the incredible opportunity to work with outstanding scientists and professionals in laboratory medicine. I worked in two labs, with Dr. Sonia Distante and Prof. Per Thorsby teams, who welcomed me warmly. It was truly one of the most enriching and formative experiences of my professional life.

*How can Young Scientists from your national society get additional information about the activities of the association and activities with the TF-YS?*
They can contact me personally, at meetings, via email, or through social networks. I prioritize staying connected and always respond when needed.

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# Contribute to IFCC eNews

## Improving equity in maternal and newborn outcomes by eliminating disparities in maternal drug screening

Opportunities for laboratory medicine to help enable and ensure health equity are expanding. In the United States, a key area is maternal and newborn screening for substance use. Despite similar rates of maternal substance use, Black peripartum mothers can be more likely to undergo urine drug screening (UDS) and be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) than White mothers. Inappropriate reporting to CPS can threaten the therapeutic relationship between patient and provider, while also creating barriers to prenatal care. Any barrier for care can have catastrophic outcomes, particularly in vulnerable areas, such as Missouri, where Black women are three times more likely to die within one year of pregnancy than White women.

*From left to right: Lauren Nacke, Vahid Azimi, Jeannie Kelly, Stephen Roper, Noor Riaz*

Like many institutions, the Washington University School of Medicine, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, and St. Louis Children's Hospital, in Missouri, used a positive history of isolated Cannabis use as an indication for UDS. Despite concerns that it is associated with other substance misuse, recent literature demonstrates no association. Nevertheless, Black mothers tend to be disproportionately tested and reported to CPS for isolated cannabis use.

To address these disparities, an integrated clinical care team composed of laboratory medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatricians, social work and information technology collaborated to safely remove isolated cannabis use as an indication for UDS in peripartum mothers. Through this collaborative effort, the number of deliveries with UDS decreased by 75% overall. Specifically, a 12% reduction was noted in Black mothers receiving UDS (from 22% to 10%) and a 1% reduction for White mothers (from 5% to 4%). Importantly, the CPS reporting rate also decreased by 66% for Black mothers and 50% for White mothers.

For their outcomes associated with eliminating racial disparities and improving patient experiences, this integrated clinical care team was awarded the 2024 Recognition of Distinction through the UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence award program. Congratulations to Vahid Azimi, *Instructor, Pathology and Immunology Assistant Medical Director of Laboratory Information Systems;* Jeannie Kelly, *Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology Medical Director, Labor and Delivery;* Lauren Nacke, Noor Riaz, *Associate Professor of Pediatrics;* Stephen Roper, *Associate Professor Pathology & Immunology Associate Director of Pediatric Laboratory Services.*

To learn more about this best practice and others, and/or to apply for global recognition, please visit www.UnivantsHCE.com.

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# News from Regional Federations and Member Societies

## Société Française de Biologie Clinique (SFBC) – International symposium: immunochemistry in laboratory medicine

By **Marie Lenski,** Young scientist from SFBC, France, **Katell Peoc'h,** SFBC President, France, **Damien Gruson,** SRBML, Belgium and SFBC, France

The French national society (Société Française de Biologie Clinique, SFBC) and its president, Prof. Katell Peoc'h, led an International symposium on immunochemistry in laboratory medicine on June 20th, 2024, in Paris, France. This national meeting, supported by Snibe Diagnostic, IFCC, and EFLM, brought together specialists in laboratory medicine during two scientific sessions.

*The sessions during the symposium*

*The IFCC President, Prof Ozben, starting her presentation*

Prof. Jean-Louis Beaudeux, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Paris Cité, moderated the first session.

Prof. Tomris Ozben, the IFCC president, took the stage as the first speaker, presenting recent advances and challenges in laboratory medicine. Her talk underscored the positive role of laboratories in healthcare, meeting the high standards and expectations of clinicians and patients. She highlighted strategic priorities for laboratories, including critical results definition, patient-specific interpretation, POCT implementation, total quality management, cost-effectiveness, traceability, accreditation, and ethics. She also stressed the need for laboratories to prepare for the establishment of smart laboratories 4.0, which will require clinical laboratory scientists to re-assess their traditional tasks and acquire new skills such as coding, cloud computing, data analytics, machine learning, and the ability to use new technologies in collaboration with clinicians.

Prof. Mario Plebani, the EFLM president, presented harmonization and standardization in immunochemistry. Our customers (doctors and patients) expect laboratory results to be equivalent and interpreted in a reliable and consistent manner. In this objective, harmonization/standardization should be an absolute priority for public health and should consider all steps of the testing process, including appropriateness in test requests, units, and procedures. Essential issues to consider are metrological traceability, measurement incertitude, and commutability. Prof. Plebani emphasized that the development of harmonization initiatives requires close interaction with all stakeholders, including the clinical laboratory community, the diagnostics industry, clinicians, professional societies, IT providers, consumer advocate groups, and governmental bodies. Laboratory specialists can count on international stakeholders to gain momentum and uptake and take part in several international initiatives.

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Prof. Damien Gruson's presentation focused on the evolving landscape of thyroid function tests (TFTs). He emphasized the advancements and ongoing challenges in the field, particularly the importance of TFTs in diagnosing and monitoring thyroid disorders. The presentation discussed the wide array of available assays, highlighting the variability and limitations of different immunoassay formats used for measuring TSH and free thyroxine (FT4). Prof. Gruson also explored the impact of these variations on clinical decision-making and the importance of personalized reference values, especially in specific populations like pregnant women. Additionally, the presentation focused on the significance of tumor markers like thyroglobulin (Tg) and calcitonin in managing thyroid cancer, particularly differentiated and medullary thyroid carcinoma. The challenges of assay specificity and the need for reliable biomarkers for accurate diagnosis and follow-up were underscored. The presentation also highlighted the evolving role of technology, including artificial intelligence, in optimizing test accuracy and integrating data, pointing toward a future where personalized medicine can be further refined in managing thyroid-related conditions.

Prof. Alain Carrié, SFBC Vice President, moderated the second session. The beginning of the session was dedicated to presentations on ultrasensitive Troponin. First, Dr Camille Gobeaux presented some fundamentals of Troponins' definition and characteristics. She described the differences between Troponin I and T and the different recommendations of the European Society of Cardiology. She underlined the impact of new kinetic scheme of iterative assays in terms of assays performances. Then, Prof. Katell Peoc'h described the first results of a monocentric study on 175 patients, comparing results obtained with two different Troponin assays in patients' cardiac risk stratification (particularly rule out) and the kinetic observed. Dr. Hamdi Dhaouadi presented the biomarkers of pre-eclampsia in clinical practice, highlighting the varied clinical and biological presentations of the condition and their associated diagnostic challenges. He emphasized that pre-eclampsia is a major cause of pregnancy complications and maternal mortality worldwide. He illustrated his points with clinical case studies to clarify the diagnostic workflow. Dr. Matthieu Bernier presented the significance of clinical and biological research in nephrology, introducing a new monitoring index developed to enhance the accuracy of parathyroid hormone (PTH) level assessments -especially beneficial for dialysis patients-. Known as the IPBGLR index, this tool aims to standardize PTH measurement results across various laboratories and methodologies, addressing the inconsistencies found in current PTH assays. The IPBGLR functions similarly to the International Normalized Ratio (INR), standardizing blood coagulation tests, thereby potentially enabling a more consistent and reliable interpretation of PTH results. Finally, Mr. Ridha Aboudi presented "How MAGLUMI X illuminates the lab." The MAGLUMI X series, developed by Snibe Diagnostics, is an advanced range of fully automated Chemiluminescence Immunoassay (CLIA) systems. This series represents Snibe's ongoing advance in in-vitro diagnostics worldwide.

During this international symposium, Prof. Vincent Sapin, FIFBCML President and SFBC past president, presented the Fédération Internationale Francophone de Biologie Clinique et de Médecine de Laboratoire (FIFBCML). Francophonie is present on all five continents, representing over 300 million people, including professionals in laboratory medicine. The FIFBCML was founded in 2007 in Hammamet and is now composed of seven national member associations: ALAM (Algeria), SRBSLM (Belgium), SCBC (Cameroun), SFBC (France), SBDL (Lebanon), SMCC (Morocco), and STBC (Tunisia). Its primary goal is to strengthen and develop connections between clinical biologists from French-speaking countries, as well as to promote scientific excellence, encourage publications, and support the training of professionals.

This international symposium on immunochemistry in laboratory medicine was a great success, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among all participants. The French national society SFBC is now happy to announce its next meeting, which will take place in Lyon, France, on March 14th, 2025. This full-day meeting will deal with "Laboratory Medicine 3.0-Rethinking practices through technology and collaboration."

SFBC would like to express its deep gratitude to Snibe Diagnostic, whose support was instrumental in the success of this symposium. We also acknowledge and appreciate the significant contributions of Prof. Tomris Ozben, IFCC president, and Prof. Mario Plebani, EFLM president, for their participation and support in this international symposium.

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*Members attending the symposium: Dr Carole Poupon (SNBH, France), Dr Mustapha Bahji (AMBM, Marocco), Prof. Katell Peoch (SFBC, France), Dr Akli Lamani (ALAM, Algéria), Dr. Anne Vasseau (Asqualab, France), Dr. Otmane Touzani (CSBM, Marocco), Dr. Badre Eddine Lmimouni (SMCC, Marocco), Prof. Tomris Ozben (IFCC President, Turkey), Dr. Azza Ben Ayed (SNBLPT, Tunisia), Prof. Manel Chabanne (STBC, Tunisia), Prof. Vincent Sapin (FIFBCML President, France), Prof. Damien Gruson (SRBML, Belgium), Dr. Myrna Germanos (SBL, Lebanon)*

*French Young Scientists attending the symposium, with Prof. Tomris Ozben IFCC President, Prof. Katell Peoc'h SFBC President, and Prof. Vincent Sapin FIFBCML President and SFBC past president.*

The On Demand content is available here

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# International Conference on Medical Laboratory and Health Science Research Concludes Successfully in Jordan

*Updates in Laboratory Sciences Highlighted at Prestigious Event*

The *International Conference of Medical Laboratory and Health Science Research,* organized by the Medical Technology & Laboratory Society, concluded successfully on November 22, 2024. The two days conference, held at Zarqa University - Jordan, brought together leading experts, researchers, healthcare professionals, and exhibitors to explore the latest updates and advancements in laboratory sciences and medical technology.

The conference focused on the theme “Updates in Laboratory Sciences,” with a series of keynote presentations, panel discussions, and workshops aimed at fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration. The event featured a diverse range of topics, including innovations in diagnostic technologies, advances in molecular biology, and the role of artificial intelligence and automation in the laboratory.

Keynote speakers from prestigious institutions around the world shared their cutting-edge research and best practices, offering valuable insights into the future of medical laboratory and health science fields. Participants had the opportunity to engage in thought-provoking discussions, network with peers, and learn about emerging trends and technologies from a wide variety of industry leaders.

In addition to the scientific sessions, the event featured a robust exhibition that showcased the latest laboratory technologies and healthcare solutions. Exhibitors from leading companies in the medical technology field displayed innovations designed to improve diagnostic accuracy, efficiency, and patient care.

The conference was attended by over than 700 delegates from across the globe, including scientists, clinicians, laboratory professionals, and industry partners. With the success of its first international conference, the Medical Technology & Laboratory Society is already planning for its next conference, which will continue to build on the momentum of this year’s discussions and initiatives.

**About the Medical Technology & Laboratory Society**
The Medical Technology & Laboratory Society is dedicated to advancing knowledge and innovation in the field of medical technology and laboratory sciences. The society promotes collaboration among researchers, practitioners, and industry leaders to drive improvements in laboratory practices, healthcare delivery, and patient outcomes.

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International Conference on Medical Laboratory and Health Science Research (CMLH) opening ceremony

Medical Technology & Laboratory Society (MTLS) booth at the ICMLH conference

International Conference on Medical Laboratory and Health Science Research (CMLH) closing ceremony

Presenting an Appreciation Plaque to Prof. Khosrow Adeli at the ICMLH Conference

Dr. Hussein Hijjawi, President of Medical technology & Laboratory Society, at ICMLH Conference Opening Ceremony

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# News from COLABIOCLI: New Autoimmunity Working Group

By **Dr Carlos von Muhlen, Carolina Valenzuela, Fernando Antúnez**

Given the advances in clinical laboratory sciences and the need to strengthen the relationship between clinical laboratory professionals and clinical physicians, the Autoimmunity Working Group of COLABIOCLI (GTAC) was formally presented on July 17 of this year, comprising the following representatives: Ana Cristina Castro, Colegio de Microbiólogos y Químicos Clínicos de Costa Rica (CMQC), Kevin Alexander Ortiz Barrientos, Asociación de Químicos Biólogos de Guatemala (AQBG), Samuel Ruiz Rodríguez, Asociación Española del Laboratorio Clínico (AEFA), Laiss Mudarra, Colegio Nacional de Laboratoristas Clínicos de Panamá (CONALAC), Luz Navarta, Confederación Unificada Bioquímica de la República Argentina (CUBRA), Alexis Jareth Sepúlveda Ruiz, Colegio Mexicano de Ciencias del Laboratorio Clínico (CMCLabC), Fernando Antúnez (Chair), Mariana Testuri and Diana Landoni, Asociación Bioquímica Uruguaya (ABU), Carolina Valenzuela Barros, Sociedad Chilena de Química Clínica (SCHQC), Orlando Gabriel Carballo and Carlos von Mühlen International Consensus on ANA Patterns (ICAP).

The general objective of GTAC is to strengthen COLABIOCLI in the field of autoimmune disease diagnostics, facilitating the dissemination of information to clinical laboratory professionals regarding the application of autoantibody tests for autoimmune diseases across different medical fields. The specific objectives include:

- Prioritize medical areas and/or defining diseases within them.
- Review the state of the art of autoantibody groups and the diagnostic criteria established/ updated by international medical societies (e.g., EULAR, ACR, ESPGHAN, EASL, IAIHG).
- Review consensus initiatives for test application, gold standards, methods, and interpretation of results (e.g., ANA, ANCA, EMA, ASMA, AMA, LKM).
- Review methods and technologies for autoantibody detection.
- Highlight aspects of quality assurance, ISO standards, etc., as applied to autoantibody testing.

Under this framework, the first joint activity was held on November 8 2024, in collaboration with Fundación Bioquímica Argentina during CALILAB 2024, titled *"First Latin American Conference on Quality Assurance in Autoimmunity Testing ANA HEp-2."* This event featured prominent international speakers, including Dr. Luis Andrade (Brazil), Dr. Carlos von Mühlen (USA/Brazil), and regional speakers such as Dr. Fernando Antunez (Uruguay), Dr. Carolina Valenzuela (Chile), Dr. Gabriel Carballo, Dr. Marta Costa, Dr. Silvia Barzón, and Dr. Jeanette Balbaryski (Argentina).

The full-day event included a participatory workshop for laboratory professionals to discuss practical aspects and the applicability of international recommendations from CLSI, EFLM, EASI, and ICAP, as well as others from Latin American countries, specifically regarding quality assurance and harmonization in the ANA HEp-2 IFA. This event concluded successfully, with approximately 100 professionals in attendance.

GTAC is currently developing a survey aimed at understanding the state of the art of Latino-American laboratories that perform autoantibody testing using rodent liver, kidney, and stomach tissue sections. This survey, which will be conducted from late November 2024 to April 2025, will serve as a tool for advancing the group's objectives.

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*Welcome Speech by Dr. Eduardo Freggiaro, President of CALILAB 2024.*

*Presenters along with COLABIOCLI President Dr. Alvaro Justiniano.*

*International Conference on Medical Laboratory and Health Science Research (CMLH) closing ceremony*

*Opening session: presenters and participants at the beginning of the conference.*

*Workshop: Discussion among professionals in working groups.*

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# Chem Con 2024 "Diagnostic Endocrinology: Recasting Clinical Care" 15th Annual Conference of Chemical Pathology, Khyber Medical College, Peshawar, Pakistan.

By **Prof Dr. Zujaja Hina Haroon,** Chairperson Organizing Committee

The Chem Con 2024, Khyber Medical College, Peshawar, organized by the Pakistan Society of Chemical Pathologists in collaboration with International Federation for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC) and Asia-Pacific Federation for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (APFCB) was held on 21st-22nd November 2024 (initially planned for November 22–23) in the beautiful city of Peshawar, Pakistan. It was a Global collaboration for sharing knowledge and expertise which blended with the rich cultural heritage of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa making this occasion very special and memorable.

*Pakistan Society of Chemical Pathologists authorities and Congress organizers in front to the Congress logo*

This conference not only brought together prominent professionals from all over the country but also clinical leads from round the world namely Dr Dianne Rosemary Webster - Director Newborn Metabolic Screening Programme, New Zealand, LabPlus, Auckland City Hospital, Dr Mehdi Mirzazadeh - Director of South West Thames Newborn Screening Services in London, clinical lead for Metabolic Bone Disease in Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS trust and the co-lead for Adult Rare Bone Disease Network in South West London and Dr Tze Ping Loh, Chair Committee of the Asia-Pacific Federation for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (APFCB), National University Hospital Singapore who shared their valuable experience and knowledge.

*Dr Dianne Rosemary Webster*

*Dr Tze Ping Loh*

*Dr Mehdi Mirzazadeh*

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The conference theme, "Diagnostic Endocrinology: Recasting Clinical Care," aimed to emphasize cutting-edge developments in diagnostic endocrinology. Its primary focus was to advance knowledge on diagnosing and monitoring endocrine disorders and the evolution of precision diagnostics in chemical pathology. The conference received formal accreditation as a regular event from Ethical MedTech under the registration number EMT39682. The conference awarded participants 12 credit points for full attendance and three points per pre-conference workshop, as accredited by PSCP. The target audience included chemical pathologists, clinicians, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and students with an interest in diagnostic endocrinology and quality control in chemical pathology.

*Prof Dr Zujaja Hina Haroon*
*Chairperson Organizing Committee*

*Prof Dr Ejaz Hassan Khan*
*Patron, ChemCon 2024*

*Prof Dr Adnan Mustafa Zubairi*
*President PSCP*

The conference offered a total of two workshops focused on the topics – "QUALITY CONTROL IN CLINICAL CHEMISTRY" and "CHARTING THE PATH: NBS SCALE-UP AND SUSTAINABILITY IN PAKISTAN" with the participation of national and international experts. In these workshops the attendees had the opportunity to interact directly with the recognized professionals in their respective fields. The expert talks in the scientific sessions enriched the technical knowledge of attendees regarding emerging trends and latest innovations in the diagnostic endocrinology, covering topics such as non-thyroidal illness, vitamin D insufficiency, congenital hypothyroidism, metabolic disorders, new biochemical markers for Alzheimer's disease and microRNAs as well as quality control and ethical considerations in diagnostic endocrinology. During the conference two other events of great importance for the participants were the traditional scientific paper and poster contest where dozens of papers on novel research work were presented. The participants for both the categories received the corresponding awards at the closing event.

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During the conference an important space was allocated to the exhibition and corporate session. All the participants showed keen interest in the various stalls which gave them opportunity to learn about cutting- edge technology in laboratory devices and equipment from prestigious international brands. They had the chance to interact with the reagent supply companies, reference service companies and laboratory administrative systems. All of this was helpful in professional updating of the participants regarding latest advancements in quality control, proficiency testing and biochemical markers.

*Prof Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb Dean Khyber Medical College Peshawar Inaugurating Exhibition*

It would not be an exaggeration to consider this conference as a wonderful educational fiesta which also included entertaining social events like Conference Gala Dinner, Peshawar City Tour and traditional local food. All of this not only enriched the event but also created a very supportive environment fostering lasting relationships providing lifelong ties and opportunities for professional growth.

I would like to express my thanks to all those who contributed towards the realization of this conference; turning it into a successful and an unforgettable event. This includes the organizers, sponsors, keynote speakers, young researchers, all the participants and above all the three societies namely PSCP, IFCC and APFCB for their global collaboration for the best patient care.

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# CALILAB 2024 in Buenos Aires: a successful biochemistry congress focused on quality

By **Dr. Eduardo Freggiaro,** FBA President, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Website: https://www.fba.org.ar/

The scientific event, which took place from 6 to 8 November 2024 in the city of Buenos Aires and was organised by the Argentine Biochemical Foundation, brought together thousands of biochemists, researchers, students and health professionals, who shared knowledge and experiences in key areas.

*Buenos Aires Convention Center Entrance*

The participation was vast: there were over 2500 people enrolled, 40 companies in the trade exhibition, 28 sponsoring institutions, 274 free papers were presented and the latest incorporation of an art space - ArteLAB - in which 33 works were exhibited. What is more, over 40 interviews were presented via streaming. The congress had an outstanding programme of activities with a focus on innovation and scientific progress. CALILAB 2024 stressed its position as one of the most important events in the biochemistry area in Argentina and the region, promoting scientific and collaborative development in a fundamental aspect of public health and technological progress in clinical laboratories.

*The area of the posters dedicated to the ArteLAB initiative: a space dedicated to the exhibition of paintings, sculptures and photographs by amateur biochemical professionals, which was very appreciated by participants.*

*The live streaming of one interviews with the some of the speakers and specialists who took part in the event*

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*One of the congress sessions*

*The posters area*

The congress was attended by 30 speakers from abroad and 115 speakers from Argentina who covered a demanding scientific programme with challenging topics such as artificial intelligence, data mining and liquid biopsy, POCT, green laboratories, laboratory information management systems, autoimmunity, artificial intelligence applied to the clinical laboratory, quality assurance, and endocrinology, among other topics. It was held at the Buenos Aires Convention Centre, a venue with large indoor spaces and a high quality building suitable for the development of such an event. The trade exhibition -Expocalilab- was attended by 40 leading companies in laboratory technology and equipment. They introduced innovative products and solutions to improve diagnostic precision and efficiency.

*The exhibition area of the CALILAB*

An unprecedented activity, which also marked the level of this meeting, was the presentation of the UNIVANTS Awards and the three winning projects of this international distinction were presented by their authors in a plenary session.

*The UNIVANTS Award Winners*

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Leading scientific figures were in charge of the inaugural conference. This is the case of Dr Gabriel Rabinovich, Argentinean biochemist, senior researcher at CONICET, Regular Plenary Professor at the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences of the UBA and pioneer in the discovery of the mechanisms of tumour escape and regulation of the inflammatory response, based on the modulation of the interaction between galectins and glycans. In turn, Dra. Tomris Ozben (Türkiye), president of the IFCC gave a plenary lecture: "Recent and future advances and challenges in clinical laboratories", and Dr. Mario Plebani, president of the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine -EFLM-; professor of Biochemistry at the University of Padova (Italy), member of the IFCC, closed the event with a lecture: "The value-based clinical laboratory: the time has come".

*Dr Gabriel Rabinovich (AR), Dr Eduardo Freggiaro (AR) and Prof Mario Plebani (IT)*

*IFCC President, Prof Tomris Ozben presenting at the Plenary session*

Of the 274 free communications presented, 264 were approved, 10 of which were selected for awards by an outstanding panel of experts. On the last day of the congress, awards were given to the best papers as well as special distinctions.

The congress organisers also acknowledged the presentation of in vitro diagnostics companies by awarding three of them prizes as the best stands.

One of the new incorporations of this 12th edition of CALILAB was the live streaming of a series of interviews with the speakers and specialists who took part in the event, and a space dedicated to the exhibition of paintings, sculptures and photographs by amateur biochemical professionals, called ArteLAB, which was most welcome by the audience.

Organisers are highly satisfied since this edition outperformed previous ones, surpassing the most ambitious expectations. It was a great effort put at the service of quality that was widely recognised by attendees.

*Distinguished Authorities at the Congress Opening Ceremony*

*Dr. Eduardo Freggiaro, FBA President, during his speech*

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*International Speakers*

The On Demand content is available here

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# Integration of ISO Standards, Regulation of Laboratory Activities

By **Alvard Avanesyan,** President of AMLDS, Aharonyan 6. Yerevan, Armenia
E-mail: armenian.mla@gmail.com

In recent years, Armenia's healthcare sector has undergone significant reforms aimed at enhancing service quality, optimizing management systems, and ensuring greater efficiency and transparency. A key focus of these reforms is aligning laboratory operations with international standards to improve the accuracy, timeliness, and reliability of medical test results. The integration of ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standards plays a pivotal role in achieving these goals, as it is recognized globally as a foundation for sustainable development and the provision of high-quality services.

In response to this need, the Government of Armenia issued Resolution No. 1413-N in September 2021, requiring all medical laboratories to implement a Quality Management System (QMS) based on ISO standards by March 2025. However, the implementation process has not been uniform across the country. Larger, financially robust private laboratories and clinics have been able to adopt ISO standards, primarily ISO 9001:2015, and in some cases, ISO 15189:2022 or JCI (Joint Commission International) accreditation. In contrast, laboratories in more remote regions have faced challenges due to financial constraints and lack of access to advanced technology.

The Association of Medical Laboratory Diagnostics Specialists of Armenia (AMLDS) has played a central role in supporting both its members and non-member specialists, particularly those in remote areas. Through organizing training sessions, conferences, and providing methodological support, the association has been instrumental in assisting laboratories in Yerevan and the regions in implementing ISO standards. A working group of experts, including representatives from key laboratories, was formed to develop a comprehensive program, which was subsequently submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval and accreditation.

To facilitate the adoption of ISO standards, the association organized six scientific-practical seminars in central cities, including Gavar, Goris, Dilijan, Gyumri, and twice in Yerevan, from August to October 2024. These seminars were attended by over 300 laboratory professionals, including senior and mid-level specialists from surrounding regions. The seminars covered ISO standards, the stages of implementation, the importance of digitalization, laboratory process management, and the proper application of test instructions. The interactive nature of the events helped change the perceptions of healthcare professionals regarding the importance of QMS, with many expressing a willingness to begin the implementation process in their institutions. Alvard Avanesyan, President of "AMLDS", Marine Yakhshyan, head of the laboratory services of "AVAG" MC and "Yerevanlab" medical laboratory, Lilit Poghosyan, qualified consultant of "AMAS' LLC , Anahit Muradyan, qualified expert in QMS, Hayarpi Davtyan, Laboratory equipment application specialist, and of course, the board members of "AMLDS", have played a huge role in this process by sharing their experience and skills.

As a result of these efforts, the process of integrating ISO standards has begun in almost all medical laboratories in Armenia, with expectations that it will be completed within the specified timeline. These reforms are anticipated to improve the quality of healthcare services, reduce medical errors, and increase the reliability of laboratory services, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more efficient and sustainable healthcare system in Armenia.

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*AMLDS Board*

*AMLDS Working group*

*Group photo at the meeting in Goris*

*Meeting in Yerevan*

*Meeting in Dilijan*

*Meeting in Gyumri*

*Working group*

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# Introducing the new Executive Board of the Société Tunisienne de Biologie Clinique (STBC) and its vision

By **Prof Yousr Galai,** President of the STBC, Professor of Immunology, Faculty of Pharmacy of Monastir, Clinical Immunology Laboratory, Pasteur Institute of Tunis, Tunisia

We are thrilled to introduce the newly elected board of the Société Tunisienne de Biologie Clinique (STBC) for the term starting October 4, 2024. More than half of our members have been re-elected, reflecting the continued trust in their leadership and vision. Two of them have previously served on the board, bringing a wealth of institutional experience. Another two have been active in the STBC Young Biologists, ensuring fresh perspectives and renewed energy. Lastly, we have a new member, who, despite being on his first mandate, brings valuable experience from the regional council of the Order of Pharmacists.

Our new board is committed to maintaining the continuity of our actions, especially by supporting training programs with partner societies. This collaboration aims to enhance skills and facilitate knowledge exchange among medical biology professionals.

The new board wasted no time getting to work. We quickly launched a call for theme suggestions from members and medical biology professionals across various sectors—hospital-university, hospital-based, private, and medical biology residents. The response was both swift and enthusiastic. The flood of proposals we received allowed us to establish a comprehensive and exciting program for the upcoming events: the National Clinical Biology Days (October 23-25, 2025), the Tunisian Practical Biology Days (May 30-31, 2025), and our continuous training days. The engagement from the community has been truly inspiring, and we are eagerly looking forward to these events, which promise to be highly informative and collaborative.

Also, one of our main focuses will be digitalization, with a special emphasis on online training. We will strive to promote regular webinars, offering wider and more flexible access to continuous education. We also aim to accredit our training activities, ensuring their official recognition and quality. This includes creating working groups to foster collaboration with other national scientific societies.

Launching certification training in molecular biology is another key project. These programs will aim to deepen biologists' expertise in this rapidly expanding field. Moreover, we are particularly dedicated to developing a certification program for the accreditation of laboratories according to the ISO 15189 standard, an international benchmark for medical biology laboratories.

In conclusion, this new mandate promises to strengthen and expand the skills of STBC members while ensuring the increased quality and recognition of our training programs. We are excited to work together to achieve these ambitious goals.

*New STBC executive board members: from left to right: Mohamed Yassine Kaabar (Archivist), Amina El Kadhi (2nd Deputy Secretary General), Asma Ghariani (Secretary General), in the foreground Mouna Sassi (2nd Vice President), Yousr Galai (President), Kais Cherni (Tresurer), Imen Zamali (Assistant Tresurer), Yomna Ben Lamine (1st Vice President), Sana Hammami (2nd Deputy Secretary General).*

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# XXVI Latin American Congress of Clinical Chemistry and XXII International Congress of College of National Bacteriology

**CNB Colegio Nacional de Bacteriología**
Email: sedenacional@cnbcolombia.org

**Event Summary**

The XXVI Latin American congress of clinical chemistry and XXII International Congress of the National College of Bacteriology was held from October 03 to 06 of 2024 in the Cartagena City, Colombia, called “the heroica” for its history and culture. A beautiful city, located in the Caribbean coast of Colombia, which has received nearly 2.000 participants including attendees, speakers, special guest, exhibitors from commercial companies and delegates from relevant organizations of Bacteriology and Laboratory Medicine at Nacional, Latin America and world level that have been part of this congress.

We received attendees from more than 30 countries who witnessed an excellent academic agenda enjoying conferences, workshops, symposiums, as well as cultural exhibitions, integrations, social and sports activities, and fantastic commercial samples where science and the laboratory was united by a single Health. In addition, parallel events to the congress were carried out such as: The Meeting of students of Bacteriology and clinical Laboratory of the Caribbean region, the 1st Latin American forum of Young Scientifics of the clinical Laboratory and the II Latin American and Caribbean meetings of academic and professional entities - VII Forum of academic entities forming Biochemistry professionals and equivalent titles.

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We want to recognize with deepest gratitude the valuable support of the IFCC, your collaboration was essential for the success of the congress. We are very honored that you have chosen Colombia as site for the Executive Board meeting.
It was a privilege to share experiences and learning with all the members of the Board of Directors, as well as with the speakers of the symposia that left a positive impression on all attendees; the contributions, knowledge and experiences they shared were invaluable for those who participated. Special thanks to Prof. Tomris for her willingness and support in each of the activities, her presence significantly raised the academic and professional level of the event.

The Latin American Confederation of Clinical Biochemistry (COLABIOCLI) and the National College of Bacteriology (CNB) joined forces in an outstanding event that captivated attendees, arousing considerable interest in the various professional topics related to the laboratory. Throughout the day, a variety of topics ranging from advances in diagnostic techniques to new perspectives in clinical research were addressed, allowing participants to update their knowledge and share experiences. The synergy between the two organizations fostered an enriching atmosphere, culminating in positive feedback that highlighted the relevance of discussing and disseminating up-to-date information in the field of biochemistry, bacteriology and laboratory medicine. This event not only strengthened the professional community, but also fostered a space for collaboration that will benefit the development of more efficient practices in the region's laboratories in the short, medium and long term. We hope that Colombia will continue to be a favorable scenario to gather.

**Ethical Dilemmas in the Use of Remnant Samples in Clinical Laboratory and Informed Consent**
Dr. Federico Remes, PhD, gave a presentation on research and the importance of the clinical laboratory in research. The aim of this presentation was to introduce a framework for decision making on the use of residual samples for research. For the attendees it was an interesting lecture, highlighting the clarity with which the subject was addressed, the interest aroused in the participants who attended the talk and the willingness to clarify doubts during the conference.

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**Professional Ethics in the HIV Diagnostic and Monitoring Laboratory.**
In the talk, Dr. Federico addressed from the point of view of professional ethics some particularities of care related to HIV-AIDS infection in the clinical laboratory. With practical examples, he discussed the problems of access to health services, the humane treatment of the infected individual, the need for specific informed consent for the performance of studies, aspects of confidentiality and the special considerations to be considered during the analytical phase and at the time of delivery of results. Continuing with his charisma, willingness and clarity he informed the audience.

**Update on Antimicrobial**
**Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing of Animal Pathogens.**
The participants highlighted the development of the conference through the experiences conveyed by the speaker, the exchange of ideas and the relevance of the topic presented, where the goal was to empower professionals to make informed decisions on the prescription of antimicrobials, ensuring quality care for patients. The success of this program is considered a potential model for other veterinary institutions wishing to implement initiatives.

**Laboratories to the Rescue: The Importance of Veterinary**
**Veterinary Diagnostics in Antimicrobial Optimization!**
During the presentation, Dr Dubraska highlighted that the fight against antimicrobial resistance in veterinary medicine is a multifaceted challenge that requires a holistic approach. During the discussion, the need to improve the diagnostic infrastructure, develop specific tools for animal medicine and foster collaboration between the different actors involved in efforts to mitigate the impact on animal, human and environmental health was highlighted.

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**Gustavo Borrajo**
**Definition of Cut-off Values: A Critical Variable for Reliability of the Neonatal Screening System**
Dr. Gustavo Borrajo, who in the opinion of the attendees addressed issues of great relevance and clarity during his presentation, delivered a conference with a deep understanding as he provided important tools for the reliability of the Neonatal Screening system as well as the critical importance of the cut-off values (CV) in the diagnostic accuracy of Neonatal Screening, the importance of a correct definition and managed to arouse interest, awakening an enriching and motivating dialogue.

**Expert Panel on Neonatal Screening.**
Dr. Gustavo Borrajo shared his analysis of neonatal screening in Argentina and Latin America, highlighting the need for criteria adapted to the particularities of the region. In this space, specialists from Colombia and in the field of Quality provided a focused perspective, emphasizing the importance of establishing common standards to ensure diagnostic accuracy. The exchange allowed to identify shared challenges and promote regional collaboration to improve screening systems, adapting local contexts and strengthening early diagnosis for the benefit of newborns in Latin America.

**Conclusions**

- The event highlighted the importance of innovation in laboratory medicine as well as the constant updating of knowledge and the implementation of models, technologies and successful laboratory practices to aid diagnosis.
- The Congress highlighted interdisciplinary and international collaboration and cooperation between professionals from different areas of clinical laboratory medicine in different countries, as the congress facilitated the exchange of experiences and the development of global themes for common challenges
- Participants enjoyed an academic program designed to emphasize the need to establish and follow quality standards to ensure the efficacy and reliability of procedures at all stages of clinical diagnostics adapted to local contexts in human, animal and environmental health.

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# Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine is born

**The merger between the three current scientific associations of Laboratory Medicine-Clinical Laboratory in Spain, AEBM-ML, AEFA and SEQCML, creates a single representative association for the medical specialty.**

**Bilbao, November 22, 2024.** As of today, there is a new medical society in Spain: the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEMEDLAB). Its creation was approved at the XVIII National Congress of the Clinical Laboratory (LABCLIN 2024) held in Bilbao Euskalduna and organized by the three existing scientific societies of Laboratory Medicine in our country, AEBM-ML, AEFA and SEQCML, which after the unanimous agreement will be eliminated.

The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine, with headquarters in Madrid, will be formally established on January 1, 2025 and the composition of the interim Board of Directors will be made up of the president Dr. Antonio Buño Soto; vice presidents Dr. María S. Pacheco and Iria Cebreiros; secretary Dr. Verónica Cámara; treasurer, Dr. José Puzo; and members: Drs. Daniel Pineda, Enrique Rodríguez, Eva Guillén, Pastora Rodríguez, Mercè Ibarz, Nerea Bastida, Laura Correa and Carla Ramírez.

The members of the former scientific societies will maintain their status as members of the new society, maintaining the seniority they had in the predecessor societies.

With this merger, the aim is to centralize the collaboration between experts, which will result in greater knowledge for laboratory professionals in our country; improve international projection, generate more organizational and financial synergies than under the previous societies, improve legal assistance to partners, and optimize continuing education courses, research, and the organization of scientific conferences.

*Members of the working group for the merger of the three societies.*

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# Correct and early diagnosis is key to reducing risks and complications during pregnancy

- **“Screening, diagnosing, and monitoring both thyroid dysfunctions and gestational diabetes help prevent complications and ensure the health of the mother and baby,” explains Dr. Gregori Casals, from the Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics Service at the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona**
- **The fetal DNA test in maternal blood presents detection rates of 95% of the most common trisomies (Down, Patau and Edwards syndromes)**

The development of new strategies in the screening for preeclampsia during the second and third trimester of pregnancy, gestational diabetes, and prenatal diagnosis are some of the areas of Laboratory Medicine that were addressed in the new edition of the National Clinical Laboratory Congress (LABCLIN 2024), which was held from November 20 to 22 in Bilbao.

The congress was organized by the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine (SEQCML), the Spanish Association of Medical Biopathology (AEBM-ML) and the Spanish Association of Clinical Laboratory Medicine (AEFA), and brought together more than 1,200 health professionals. It was a great opportunity to attend discussion panels and scientific activities organized by the different scientific societies, as well as different symposia where one could delve deeper into and analyze the main innovations in Laboratory Medicine.

Specifically, the symposium, “The laboratory in maternal-fetal medicine: current situation and future prospects” moderated by Dr. Belén Prieto, clinical biochemist of the Metabolic and Population Screening Section in the Clinical Biochemistry Service at the Central University Hospital of Asturias in Oviedo, will delve into the work of the Clinical Laboratory specialist in the areas of thyroid dysfunction in pregnancy, gestational diabetes, and prenatal diagnosis of chromosomal abnormalities (TPNI).

### Thyroid dysfunction and gestational diabetes during pregnancy

Thyroid disorders that occur during pregnancy are common and can cause negative effects for both the mother and the fetus. Therefore, it is important to make a correct and early diagnosis in order to carry out an effective therapy that reduces risks. In this sense, Laboratory Medicine plays a key role in “screening, diagnosis and monitoring both thyroid dysfunctions and gestational diabetes, allowing for early and appropriate intervention that helps prevent complications and ensure the health of the mother and baby,” according to Dr. Gregori Casals, member of the Hormones Commission and the Biochemical Assessment Commission for Liver Disease of the SEQCML and consultant for the Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics Service of the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona.

The most common thyroid dysfunction in pregnancy is hypothyroidism (insufficient thyroid activity), which if left untreated can lead to complications such as an increased risk of spontaneous abortion (miscarriage), premature birth, and alterations in fetal neurological development. “The main biochemical test for its detection is the measurement of thyrotropin (TSH) which, if altered, must be complemented with a more complete study of thyroid function,” explains Dr. Casals.

As the researcher points out, gestational diabetes is characterized by glucose intolerance, mediated in part by hormonal changes that increase insulin resistance. “It can cause complications such as fetal macrosomia (the baby is born with a greater than normal weight), difficult delivery, and a

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higher risk of type 2 diabetes and repeated gestational diabetes in a future pregnancy." Similarly, "for screening and diagnosis there are various protocols based on the determination of glucose intolerance," adds Dr. Casals.

**Protocols for monitoring pregnancy and acting in accordance**

At a territorial level, and specifically in the Basque Country, according to Dr. Eva Barrenechea Iparraguirre, a specialist in the Biochemistry Service of the Galdakao-Usansolo Hospital in Bizkaia, "pregnancy requires adequate monitoring, in order to control possible alterations that may appear and prevent them or diagnose them early, especially those with a higher prevalence, such as diabetes." In the words of the speaker, "the laboratory performs an oral glucose tolerance test on pregnant women to see whether or not they have developed gestational diabetes, and to be able to not only monitor the health of the pregnant woman, but also that of her future baby, as well as prevent future complications."

Currently, there are many protocols for monitoring pregnancy. "Some of those we have implemented in our center are: screening for thyroid dysfunction, anemia, infections prior to pregnancy, preeclampsia, and chromosomal abnormalities," explains the specialist.

The role of Laboratory Medicine in monitoring the mother's health during pregnancy and identifying the risk of complications, such as preeclampsia, is also important. In addition, the importance of carrying out nutritional status assessments and screening tests to detect metabolic or genetic disorders was highlighted.

At this time, "Osakidetza has launched a preeclampsia screening programme to identify those pregnant women at higher risk of developing it and to be able to establish a preventive treatment that reduces the risk of serious complications during pregnancy and premature birth," adds Dr. Barrenechea.

**Prenatal Diagnosis (non-invasive prenatal test)**

When specialists talk about NIPT (non-invasive prenatal test) they are referring to the analysis of circulating free DNA in maternal blood. "We have been doing prenatal screening for chromosomal abnormalities for over 20 years, which consists of determining the risk of the 3 most common trisomies," explains the specialist. "Trisomy 21 (Down syndrome), trisomy 18 (Edwards syndrome) and trisomy 13 (Patau syndrome) seriously affect the life of the future child, with trisomy 21 having the highest prevalence in live births," she stresses.

Since 2000, different strategies have been developed for prenatal screening of chromosomal abnormalities using biochemical and ultrasound markers, such as nuchal translucency (fluid accumulation in the nape of the neck and posterior part of the fetus' neck). Thanks to these strategies, according to Dr. Barrenechea, it has been possible to calculate the risk of chromosomal abnormalities with a detection rate of over 90% and a false positive rate of less than 5%. Since 2011, the noninvasive prenatal test (NIPT) began to be used for screening for the most frequent chromosomal abnormalities. "In recent years, the advance of genomic technologies has allowed the introduction into clinical practice of screening strategies based on analysis of circulating free DNA, with a detection rate of over 95% for the three most common trisomies and false positive rates of 0.5%," highlights Dr. Eva Barrenechea.

Finally, in the coming years, greater progress and innovation are expected in the field of prenatal diagnosis, where "the use of more powerful techniques will allow more cases to be detected reliably, and screening can even be extended to other diseases," says the speaker.

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Sociedad Española de Medicina de Laboratorio (SEQC-ML) - Labtestonline. https://www.labtestsonline.es/conditions/enfermedades-tiroideas (last access: November 2024)

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# IFCC welcomes one new affiliate member: Argentine Biochemistry Foundation Fundación Bioquímica Argentina (FBA)

By **Dr. Eduardo Freggiaro,** FBA President, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Website: https://www.fba.org.ar/

The Argentine Biochemistry Foundation, (FBA, for its name in Spanish), is a non-profit public organisation aimed at translating the advances of the Biochemical Sciences into tangible actions for the benefit of the health of the population. The institution was founded in 1992 by the ten Biochemical districts that constitute the Biochemical Federation of the Province of Buenos Aires. Currently, it has ten programmes whose aim is to provide training, evaluation and accreditation to biochemists and laboratories throughout the country and thus improve biochemists' performance. Every two years, it holds one in-person congress: CALILAB, and one on-line congress: VirtuaLAB.

**FBA Programmes**

1. **External Quality Assessment Programme –PEEC,** for its name in Spanish: since its inception in 1987, it analyses and studies analytical results so as to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of services. It currently has 3295 participating laboratories throughout the country. This programme makes it possible to study the operating conditions of these laboratories and to compare their performance with defined quality standards. It covers 29 clinical laboratory specialties. **Laresbic.** This specialised metrological laboratory has been operating since 1998. It is central to the PEEC standardisation and harmonisation programme and to the evaluation of analytical procedures. It provides services of reference value assignment, certification, calibration, validation and/or verification of analytical procedures both to the Clinical Laboratories participating in the PEEC and eventually to the In Vitro Diagnostic Products Industry. It is the only laboratory in the southern hemisphere certified for the standardisation procedure for HDL and LDL Cholesterol according to the protocols of the Cholesterol Reference Method Laboratory Network (CRMLN) of the CDC.

2. **Inborn Errors of Metabolism Detection Programme -ERRORES-**: It has been in operation since 1991 and has evolved significantly. It currently screens for a panel of 7 congenital diseases in newborns (phenylketonuria, congenital hypothyroidism, cystic fibrosis, galactosemia, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, biotinidase deficiency, and maple syrup urine disease) by means of an analysis of a few drops of blood. This screening service is provided to both the private and public sectors in the province of Buenos Aires. During the last year (2023) it processed a total of 820,088 determinations over a number of 127,016 samples.

3. **Laboratory Accreditation Programme -- PAL,** for its name in Spanish: Since 1994, it has been promoting improved quality in laboratory medicine through the Accreditation process, based on the evaluation of their Quality Management Systems, through audits aimed at facilitating awareness-raising and access of the population to better biochemical care services. It assesses the laboratory's activities by comparing them with standards of structure, processes and results, corresponding to the pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical phases. These have been defined by consensus, taking into account aspects included in the requirements of the ISO/DIS 15189 standard, originally called "Quality Management in Medical Laboratories". It currently has 670 accredited laboratories throughout the country.

4. **Continuing Education Programme-PROECO,** for its name in Spanish. Since 1997 it has provided a system of training and professional development through virtual and face-to-face courses and workshops. To date, more than 60,000 trainees and more than 2,300 trainers have participated.

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5. **Food Control Programme-PROCAL** -for its name in Spanish. Since 1999, it has provided training and counselling to professionals and companies in the sector, as well as recommendations to the community to improve the quality of the food they consume.

6. **Biosafety, Security in Health Institutions and Environmental Management Programmme -BIOSEGA-** Since 1999 it has been analysing the probable risks in the handling of infectious material, promoting actions and regulations and developing procedures to avoid those risks or to act if they occur. It develops counseling programmes for public and private institutions. It offers courses for the training of technical and management staff.

7. **Programme for the Control of Cardiovascular Diseases -PROCORDIS-** Since 2000 it has been developing activities aimed at the promotion, prevention and research of cardiovascular diseases. It works in research, training for health professionals and community actions.

8. **Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme –PROSAR.** This has been ongoing since 2007 in regional agencies throughout Argentina as participatory workshops to enhance the quality of biochemical tests. It also carries out development and training activities that contribute to improve the quality of sexual and reproductive life of women through prevention, diagnosis, follow-up and treatment of genital dysfunction and the main sexually transmitted infections.

9. **Incentives for the Advancement of Clinical Laboratory Science Programme –PROES -** Since 2014, it has been promoting and executing scientific and technological activities in Argentina in the different areas of the Clinical Laboratory, issuing awards, granting internships and training scholarships, subsidies for research projects and organising meetings to disseminate advances and new scientific findings.

10. **Biochemical Health Observatory - OBIOS –** It was created in 2019 to facilitate public health decision-making and the design of population health policies and interventions through the collection, processing and dissemination of information gathered from the laboratories in Argentina that collaborate providing their data.

**CALILAB**
Since 2000, and every two years, the Argentine Biochemical Foundation has been organising the Argentine Congress on Quality in Laboratory Medicine - CALILAB – a leading event at the national level and one of the most important of its kind in Latin America, because of the quality of its contents and because of the hierarchy of its guests, the number of attendees and the prestige of its numerous speakers. Its venues have been the cities of Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata. The evolution and growth over the 12 editions have been significant in terms of the number of attendees and speakers.

**VirtuaLAB**
VirtuaLAB has been since 2015, the virtual congress of the FBA, which is renewed every two years. On the congress platform, a panel of experts, selected by the Scientific Committee, offers dissertations presented in video format along with materials that complement and enrich them. It is a user-friendly proposal in which participants can access the contents via the Internet from any device and it also has a specific discussion forum where to interact with the speakers and colleagues who have taken part, as well as interactive online self-evaluations.

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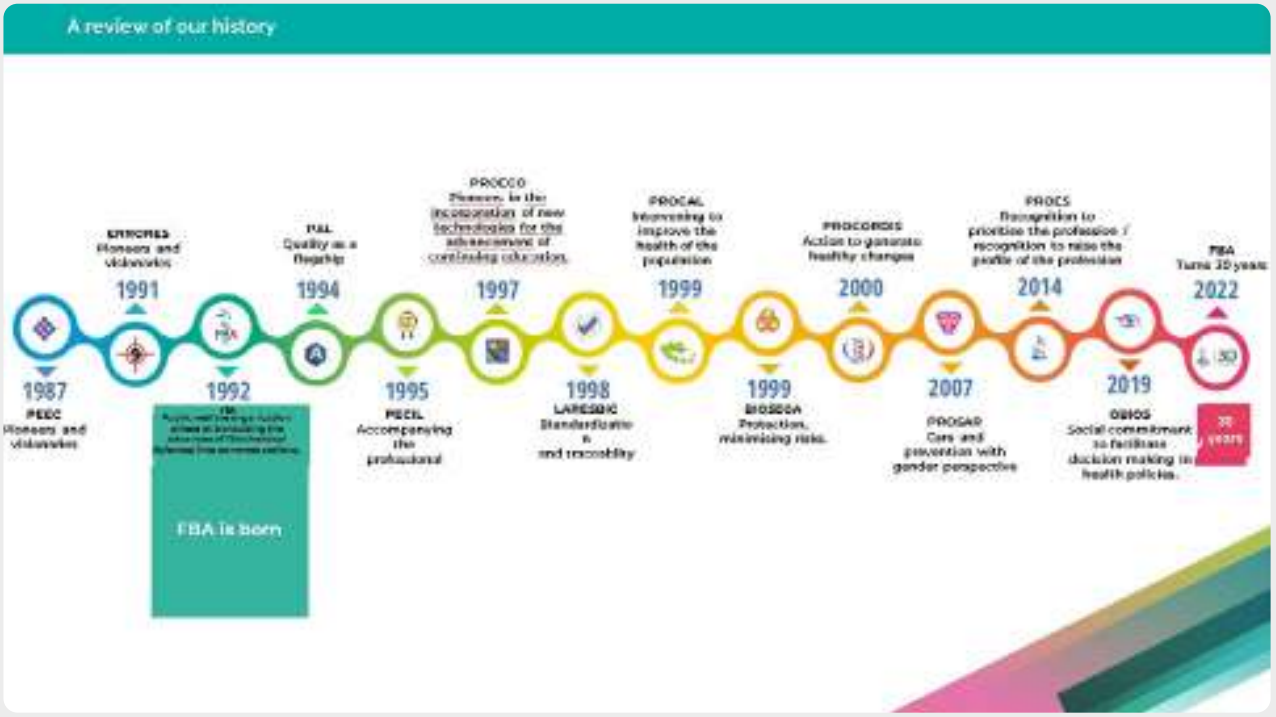

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# News from the IFCC President

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to share some wonderful news with you.

Dr. Mauro Panteghini has been elected as the Chairman of the JCTLM by its Executive Committee during the JCTLM Annual Meeting held on December 4, 2024, recognizing his exceptional qualifications and long-standing contributions to the JCTLM.

On behalf of the IFCC Executive Board, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Panteghini on his election as the JCTLM Chairman for a two-year term, renewable for an additional two years. We also congratulate Dr. Robert Wielgosz, nominated by the BIPM, on being elected as the JCTLM Executive Secretary.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to Dr. Greg Miller for his remarkable service and dedication as the JCTLM Chair over the past four years. His term as Chair will conclude in 2024, and his contributions have been invaluable to the JCTLM's success.

Kind regards,

Tomris Ozben

IFCC President

*The JCTLM Executive Committee members at their meeting in Paris on 4th December 2024. From left to right: Dr Stéphanie Maniguet (JCTLM Secretariat, BIPM), Dr Anja Kessler (IFCC), Prof. Christa Cobbaert (IFCC Scientific Division Chair), Prof Tomris Ozben (IFCC President), Prof Mauro Panteghini (JCTLM DB WG vice-Chair, AG2, newly elected JCTLM Chair), Prof Greg Miller (JCTLM Chair), Mr Terry Fawcett (ICSH), Dr Karen Phinney (JCTLM DB WG vice-Chair, AG3), Dr Graham Jones (ILAC), Dr Robert Wielgosz (JCTLM Executive Secretary, BIPM), Dr Qinde Liu (JCTLM DB WG vice-Chair, AG1)*

# IFCC's Calendar of Congresses, Conferences & Events

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| IFCC and Regional Federation Events | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Date** | | **Title** | **Place** |
| **May 18 - 22, 2025** | | XXVI IFCC-EFLM EUROMEDLAB 2025 | Brussels, BE |
| **Oct 25 - 30, 2026** | | XXVII IFCC WORLDLAB 2026 | New Dehli, IN |
| **Oct 10 - 13, 2027** | | APFCB 2027 KUALA LUMPUR | Kuala Lumpur, MY |
| **Date to be selected** | | XXVII IFCC-EFLM EUROMEDLAB 2027 | Venue to be selected |
| **Date to be selected** | | XXVII IFCC WORLDLAB 2028 | **Venue to be selected** |
| **Date to be selected** | | XXVII IFCC-EFLM EUROMEDLAB 2029 | Venue to be selected |
| **Date to be selected** | | XXVII IFCC WORLDLAB 2030 | **Venue to be selected** |

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## Corporate Member Events with IFCC Auspices

| Date | Title | Place |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 12, 2025** | International Symposium on Laboratory Medicine | SNIBE, CN |
| **Jan 15 - May 31, 2025** | Validation and Verification of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods | Quality Consulting, online events |
| **Mar 21, 2025** | International Symposium on Laboratory Medicine SNIBE | Warsaw, PL |

## Other events with IFCC auspices

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