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EuroLabNews

THE EFLM BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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



HOT TOPIC IN LABORATORY MEDICINE

Global viral outbreaks:
reaffirming the importance of
pan-European collaboration

by Giuseppe Lippi, EFLM Executive Board Secretary; Ana-Maria Simundic, EFLM President

Nearly eighteen years after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic (i.e., in 2002-03), eight years after the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) epidemic (i.e., in 2012) and six years after the most recent Ebola outbreak (i.e., in 2013-16), Europe and the entire world are again challenged by a new and even more severe infectious hazard. A novel outbreak, originated in the town of Wuhan (China) at the end of 2019, has rapidly spread inside and outside that Country. This last epidemic is caused by a virus emerged from the family of Coronaviridae (i.e., COVID-19), which encompasses enveloped, positive-sense, single-stranded RNA viruses, of approximately 26-32 kb length. The genome of COVID-19 was found to be similar - though not completely identical - to that of SARS Coronavirus (i.e., SARS-CoV), thus displaying high homology with the family of Coronaviruses that can be isolated from bats, whereby this animal is the largest reservoir for this viral species (1). According to the last statistics of the World Health Organization (WHO), the COVID-19 epidemic has already caused more deaths than SARS and MERS altogether (i.e., over 33,000), and the problem has now assumed the characteristics of a pandemic disease (2). The clinical picture of COVID-19 is highly variable. The severity of the syndrome appears perhaps lower than those caused by SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV and Ebola, though the

To be continued on page 2

Foreword

by Harjit Pal Bhattoa, Editor EFLM EuroLabNews



This spring issue of the EuroLabNews commences with a very relevant and exact up to date on the current global COVID-19 viral outbreak by Giuseppe Lippi and Ana-Maria Simundic. It reiterates the importance of pan-European collaboration. The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for

Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) announce free access to a series of European Standards for medical devices and protective equipment in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gilbert Wieringa, former Chair of the EFLM Profession Committee, and Rob Jansen, former Chair of the EC4 Register Commission, remembers José María Queralto who recently passed away for his contribution to the advancement of the Profession in Europe. EFLM bursaries for the EFLMLabX are an attractive must for all seeking special training abroad. The 3rd EFLM Strategic Conference "Demand Management", to be held in late November, 2020, is an event where all professionals in the Laboratory field would want to be. Change of guard is reported by the National Societies of France and Ukraine. The Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine regrettably report the death of one of its most illustrious members, Dr. Josep Maria Queralto. As usual, the IFCC corner summarizes happenings in Laboratory Medicine with a global perspective. The Calendar of Events not only lists all events in our field but also calls attention on postponements and possible cancellation of events. And above all, the EFLM Newsletter team wishes all our readers good health, keep safe!

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seemingly lower virulence justifies a much larger worldwide diffusion (as many as 693,224 patients have been diagnosed with COVID-19 infection at March 31, 2020 around the world, compared with 8437 diagnosed with SARS, 2494 with MERS and 28646 with Ebola, respectively) (2). As previously mentioned, the clinical characteristics of COVID-19 infection are largely heterogeneous, whereby most patients develop common Coronavirus signs and symptoms (i.e., fever, cough and myalgia), whilst between 15-20% of patients may evolve towards a more severe form of infection (i.e., interstitial, often bilateral, pneumonia), and between 2-5% of them will then die for complications. Onset of complications and death have been more frequently observed in elderly patients (i.e., aged 65-70 years or older), and in those with important comorbidities such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes (1).

As for many other earlier viral outbreaks, but especially for this new epidemic, early diagnosis is crucial for enabling timely isolation and management of affected cases, thus allowing to limit contagion and provide better care to diseases individuals. Although serological assays may be of help for surveillance or investigational purposes, molecular testing remains the gold standard for diagnosing COVID-19 infection. Soon after isolation of the first case, a vast array of molecular diagnostic tests, based on real-time reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR), have become available for fast and accurate identification of the virus (3).

The important lesson that can be learnt from this last global outbreak, which has thus far involved hundreds and thousands European citizens from virtually all European Countries, is that an infectious health hazard emerging from a single nation or territory cannot be longer confined or contained, thus soon becoming a worldwide healthcare issue. This evidence has become especially clear with COVID-19, whereby low virulence, relatively long incubation time (i.e., between 2-14 days), high inter-human transmission, initial hesitation on accurately identifying the infectious risk, combined with the huge number of people that are now travelling (i.e., the World Tourism Organization estimates that the number of international tourists approximates 1.5 billion each year), have contributed to enormously amplify the volume of infected cases halfway around the world, favoring the diffusion of the virus in areas quite distant from its origin. This straightforward evidence brings some important reflections, which deeply involve laboratory medicine and its European Federation. First, rapid dissemination of reliable clinical and laboratory information, thus overwhelming the burden of fake news and unjustified "cyber-chondria", contributes to reinforce the essential role of supranational Federations and Associations in taking the lead for delivering trustable information to physicians, laboratory professionals and even to our patients. Then, creation of effective partnership, synergization and networking of Countries under the umbrella on an European Federation is a vital trajectory for enabling that Nations with higher resources can help those with lower incomes to face this and other emerging challenges. Rapid transmission of RT-PCR protocols (3), indications on the best pre-analytical and analytical practices that shall be used for generating

accurate data (4), along with availability of reference laboratories to take on testing for low-resource areas, seems now virtually unavoidable to provide timely and efficient response to natural hazards and/or disasters (5). Last but not least, taking benefit from all its Committees and functional units, the EFLM shall be regarded as one of the most valued actors for communicating trustable scientific information, for providing education, as well as for supporting regulatory agencies in defining high and applicable standards to in vitro diagnostic testing. What can hence be learnt from this last COVID-19 global outbreak is that federation - and not certainly disaggregation - of many and more European Societies of Laboratory Medicine would provide the most powerful and efficient answer to a virtually inscrutable future, undermined by emerging infections and by the dark shadows of an ever growing antimicrobial resistance (6).

Course:

https://area9lyceum.com/covid19_course/

Pearl:

<https://www.aacc.org/clinical-chemistry-trainee-council/trainee-council-in-english/pearls-of-laboratory-medicine/2020/coronavirus-disease-2019>

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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Experience adaptive learning on COVID-19



Free Course

Coronavirus Disease 2019

The course has been developed by Prof. Nader Rifai and Prof. Giuseppe Lippi as part of AACCC Learning Lab on NEJM Knowledge+.

[Click here to access the course](#)

Related contents: "Pearl in Laboratory Medicine"

Dr. Lippi investigates what we know of the COVID-19 strain of Coronavirus that is spreading quickly throughout the world. The Pearl reveals potential origins for the virus, how it attacks the body, its symptoms, and associated laboratory abnormalities.

[Click here to access the presentation](#)

CEN and CENELEC make European standards available to help prevent the COVID-19 contagion

by Giovanni Collot, Project Manager Strategy & Governance, CEN-CENELEC Management Centre

Brussels, 20 March 2020 - In response to the coronavirus outbreak, CEN, the European Committee for Standardization, and CENELEC, the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization, agreed, in collaboration with all their Members and after the urgent request from the European Commission, to make freely available a series of European standards (ENs) for medical devices and personal protective equipment used in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This exceptional decision is motivated by the need to tackle the severe shortage of protective masks and medical equipment experienced all around Europe due to the exponential growth of the COVID-19 emergency. The standards will enable a quicker and smoother access to market of new fundamental medical and protection equipment.

Providing free access to the national adoptions of this set of European standards facilitates the work of the many companies within the European Economic Area which are reconvertng their production lines to deliver tangible results quickly and ensure that healthcare professionals and patients have access to the equipment they urgently need.

The 11 standards developed by CEN and potentially 3 additional ones developed jointly with ISO made available cover common filtering masks, medical gloves and protective clothing. They are the fruit of a collective European effort. These European standards were developed and adopted by different Technical Bodies, taking into account the contributions of hundreds of experts and stakeholders in the personal protective equipment and medical field all around Europe.

The standards are available for free download from the websites of [CEN national members](#).

Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market, saluted the initiative: "In our battle against the coronavirus we need to act with urgency, solidarity and in a coordinated manner. We need audacity and innovative ways of producing the equipment we need. I am encouraging manufacturers to evaluate the possibilities of increasing and diversifying production, building on positive examples such as textile and shoe manufacturers starting to produce masks and gowns. I will do everything possible to support their efforts. I am pleased to announce that following contacts with the Commission, today CEN and CENELEC agreed to make freely available the standards needed for such companies to be able to produce masks and other protective equipment. This agreement has immediate effect."

Vincent Laflèche, CEN President, commented: "Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are living unprecedented circumstances which require exceptional measures. By making a set of standards available for free, the European standardization community is committed to help the European Commission in its effort to build the first common European reserve of emergency medical equipment (Re-scEU)".

Dany Sturtewagen, CENELEC President, added: "European standards play a crucial role in ensuring the availability of key medical devices and personal protective equipment. This extraordinary step is in line with the key drivers of our European standardization work: inclusiveness and unity. I salute the reaction of solidarity and commitment from our Members to support the global fight against COVID-19".

More about

CEN website: www.cen.eu

CENELEC website: www.cenelec.eu

CEN-CENELEC website: www.cencenelec.eu

IN MEMORY OF JOSÉ MARÍA QUERALTÓ

In memory of José María Queraltó



by Gilbert Wieringa, former Chair EFLM Profession Committee and Rob Jansen, former Chair of the EC4 Register Commission



It is with enormous sadness that EFLM News has to report the passing of José on 26th March 2020. Known throughout EC4 and EFLM as a kind, caring and thoughtful man, he lent his wisdom and support to family, friends and colleagues with selflessness and sincerity. Quality was at the heart of everything he did. He was one of the authors of the first version of ISO 15189. He was president of FESCC from 1993-1996. Education, training and equal opportunity were the values that drove him. He was there at the forefront when the EC4 (now EFLM) Register of Specialist in Laboratory Medicine was established. His name is among the authors of the first and many following versions of the Syllabus. At the time of his passing he was preparing a revision of the expected code of conduct of specialists in laboratory medicine, having widely researched the ethics of professional practice since his retirement in December 2019. On behalf of his many colleagues and friends EFLM conveys our sad condolences to Maribel, his wife, and all his family. He was a fine man who will be greatly missed.

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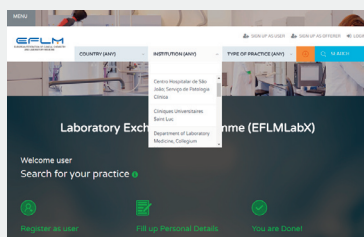
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For more information

Click here to access the tutorial

EFLMLabX has been developed by Prof. Evgenija Homsak, Chair of the EFLM Profession Committee.
Contact: eflm@eflm.eu

UPCOMING EFLM EVENTS

3rd EFLM Strategic Conference "Demand management"

by Merve Gungoren, Chair EFLM Working Group "Promotion and Publications"



After the successful first two strategic conferences in Milan (2014) and Mannheim (2018) with great pleasure we wish to invite you to the 3rd EFLM Strategic conference: "Demand management", to be held on 27-28 Nov 2020 in Zagreb (Croatia).

Demand management is a highly relevant topic for laboratory medicine. Inappropriate test requests lead to the huge waste of human and financial resources, they negatively affect laboratory productivity and put patient safety at risk. The conference program will focus on the growing problem of over- and under-utilization of laboratory tests and how it affects medical decisioning and patient safety. Conference will deliver latest data on the topic and offer some game-changing solutions, delivered by key opinion leaders and experts. We will

give you a truly global perspective of the problem and respective challenges. An important goal of the conference will be to agree on the right strategy, that we as a profession should use to successfully address the inappropriate utilization of laboratory resources. Our strategy will consider everything from the definition of the necessary competences and skills for laboratory professionals, our role and position in the healthcare, to the practical tools to be used in order to achieve our goals. We are determined to provide a highly dynamic environment, in an engaging and interactive format.

Save the date and join us in Zagreb in 2020! Let us shape our future together.

For more information: <http://www.eflm-strategic-conference.eu/>

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN THE EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Changing of the guard in the EFLM National Societies

by Silvia Cattaneo, EFLM Office

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

Société Française de Biologie Clinique

Prof. Joëlle Goudable (ISPB- faculté de Pharmacie, Université Lyon1) is the new EFLM National Representative for the French Society of Clinical Biology replacing Prof. Michel Voubourdolle.

Association of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine of Ukraine

Dr. Oleksandr Kheilomskyi is the new President of the Association of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine of Ukraine replacing Ganna Lunova after her premature death. EFLM deepest condolences goes to Prof. Lunova's family and to the Association of Clinical Chemistry & Laboratory Medicine of Ukraine.

Save the date and join us in Zagreb in 2020!



Let us shape our future together.

NEWS FROM EFLM NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Dr. Josep Maria Queraltó dies, Esteemed member of the SEQC^{ML} for 35 years

SEQC^{ML}
Sociedad Española de Medicina de Laboratorio



Barcelona, March 31, 2020.- The Spanish Society for Laboratory Medicine (SEQC^{ML}) regrets having to report the death of one of its most illustrious members, Dr. Josep Maria Queraltó, 67 years old, who left us suddenly, on Friday, March 27, at his home in Sant Andreu de Llavaneres (Barcelona). The SEQC^{ML} wishes to convey its heartfelt condolences to the relatives and close friends of Dr. Queraltó and especially to his wife.

Dr. Queraltó had been a very involved member of the Spanish Society of Laboratory Medicine for 35 years. His activities at the national level included his position as secretary of the Board of Directors of the Society from 1990 to 1996, the presidency of the former Reference Values Commission and the Education Committee during the 80s and 90s, and the presidency of the Drugs Monitoring and Clinical Toxicology Commission during two periods (2004-2005 and 2013-2018).

In addition, he was a member of the Commission on the Diagnostic Value of Biochemical magnitudes (1985-1989) and of the Scientific Committee of the Society (1985-1992), as well as of the Editorial Committee of the Química Clínica Journal and the Board of Directors; he was still holding the last position at the time of his death.

Likewise, his work representing SEQC^{ML} in international organizations has been of great importance, as he held highly significant positions, such as the presidency of the board of the European Federation of European Societies of Clinical Chemistry (FESCC). He was also a member of the EC4 European Registry Committee from 2000 to the present.

His perseverance in the many international tasks in which he participated and his international contacts, which he cultivated and maintained exquisitely, helped the SEQC^{ML} to be present at numerous international events. Among these it is worth noting, due to its great impact, the organization of the congresses EuroMedLab Barcelona 2003, of which he was president of the Scientific Committee, and EuroMedLab Barcelona 2019, of which he was a member of the Organizing Committee. The success of both European Congresses gave the SEQC^{ML} an enormous boost and visibility at an international level.

In the days since his death, the Society has received dozens of emails and written statements from various countries around the world, expressing sorrow and dismay at the loss of such a beloved and valued person. Within his great human and professional worth, all those who had the opportunity to interact with him highlighted his patience and his great vision for the future in the field of Laboratory Medicine training.



Dear colleagues,
all the countries worldwide are facing the threat of this new coronavirus. A "crown" in the name of this threat, makes it very bizarre, but we should definitely try not to panic. Some of you may be doing research on it in labs, some may be helping in detecting it. Let's hope for the better!

Due to the Coronavirus concerns and worldwide travel restrictions, the WorldLab Congress in Seoul has been postponed. On behalf of the IFCC Executive Board, we are delighted to inform you that the **IFCC WorldLab Congress in Seoul has been rescheduled to January 6-10, 2021**. Keep up-to-date about the evolving situation

and contact organizing secretariats for any updates on all other incoming events.

EJIFCC'S INCLUSION IN SCOPUS



The IFCC is happy to announce that the electronic Journal of the IFCC - the eJIFCC, has been recently accepted for inclusion in Scopus. Inclusion of the Journal in Scopus is a testimony to the significant accomplishment of the journal just in a few years. Scopus is the world's largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. [Read more](#)

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The UNIVANTS of Healthcare Excellence Program extended the application deadline for their prestigious, annual awards to AUGUST 31, 2020. Every integrated clinical care team who is maximizing laboratory data in unique and/or avant-garde ways for measurable benefit to patients, payors, clinicians and health system(s) is eligible to win. To learn more and apply, visit: www.UnivantsHCE.com.

IFCC WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The Georgian Medical Laboratory Association (GLMA) joined IFCC as Full member. The Georgian Medical Laboratory Association was founded in 1998 as a non-political, non-profit organization. The primary purpose as of today remains raising an awareness of laboratory medicine in Georgia, introducing and implementing the latest methods and technologies available internationally and enhancing qualifications of laboratory staff. Georgian Laboratory Medicine Association promotes and coordinates scientific, philanthropic, intellectual and professional activities in Georgia. [Read more](#)

Zhejiang Quark Biotechnology Co., Ltd., new IFCC Corporate Member, was founded in 1993, it is the first batch of state-level high-tech enterprises specialized in R&D, production and sales of clinical diagnostic reagents in vitro. It passed GB/T19001-2016 idt ISO 9001-2015, YY/T 0287-2017 idt, ISO 13485-2016 certification. It has 102 certificates of in vitro diagnostic products, and the products have passed the certification of external Quality Assessment of the Clinical Laboratory Center of the Ministry of Health. Visit: <http://www.zjkuake.com/>.

Labtronic, new IFCC Corporate Member, was established in 2009 to promote clinical diagnostic laboratory equipment and reagents. Labtronic works only with trusted manufacturers of laboratory equipment and reagents who have established themselves as leaders in the field of in-vitro diagnostics. For more information visit: www.labtronic.me; www.labtronic.eu

Calendar of EFLM events and events under EFLM auspices

Do not miss the opportunity to have your event listed here.

Due to COVID-19 alert throughout the world, some upcoming events could be cancelled or postponed, please direct check with the organizers if the date is confirmed.

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25 March 2020 *(the date has been postponed later in the year. Please contact the organizers for further information)*
42nd LABAC Conference "First international conference on in vitro hemolysis"
Paris (FR) [Click here for information](#)

8-9 April 2020
7th Serbian Biomarker Symposium (SERBIS): Biomarkers of gastrointestinal diseases
Belgrade (SRB) [Click here for information](#)

27-28 March 2020 *(the date has been postponed later in the year. Please contact the organizers for further information)*
TBS-BD 2020 Preanalytical Phase Symposium
Mardin (TR) [Click here for information](#)

15-18 April 2020
13th International & 18th National Congress on Quality Improvement in Clinical Laboratories
Tehran (IR) [Click here for information](#)

6-7 April 2020
6th Serbian Biomarker Symposium (SERBIS): Lipid Metabolism in Health and Disease
Belgrade (SRB) [Click here for information](#)

27-28 April 2020
"Roman Days" in Laboratory Medicine
Rome (IT) [Click here for information](#)

6-8 May 2020

4th Conference of the Romanian Association of Laboratory Medicine

Targu-Mures (RO)

[Click here for information](#)

11-13 October 2020

XIV Congress of Slovak Society of Clinical Biochemistry

High Tatras (SK)

[Click here for information](#)

14-16 May 2020

15th Baltic Congress of Laboratory Medicine

Riga (LV)

[Click here for information](#)

23 October 2020

International Conference on Laboratory Medicine "Pathology and Laboratory Medicine: the promise, the hope, the peril"

Padova (IT)

[Click here for information](#)

22-24 May 2020 (the date has been postponed later in the year. Please contact the organizers for further information)

XVth International Congress of Paediatric Laboratory Medicine

Seoul (KR)

[Click here for information](#)

16-18 November 2020

Vårmöte, Klinisk Kemi 2020

Umea (SW)

[Click here for information](#)

9-12 June 2020

XXXVII Nordic Congress in Medical Biochemistry

Trondheim (NO)

[Click here for information](#)

27-28 November 2020

3rd EFLM Strategic Conference

"Demand Management"

Zagreb (HR)

[Click here for information](#)



23-25 June 2020

Swiss MedLab 2020

Bern (CH)

[Click here for information](#)

30 November 2020

14th CIRME International Scientific Meeting "Implementation of metrological traceability in laboratory medicine: where we are and what is missing"

Milan (IT)

[Click here for information](#)

27-29 August 2020

60th Meeting of the Hungarian Society of Laboratory Medicine

Miskolc (HU)

[Click here for information](#)

4-5 December 2020

54th days of Practical Biology

Paris (FR)

[Click here for information](#)

18 September 2020

5th Conference of Kosovo Association of Clinical Chemistry

Pristhina (XK)

[Click here for information](#)

25-26 March 2021

6th EFLM Conference on Preanalytical Phase - Biannual Conference organized by the EFLM Working Group on "Preanalytical Phase" in collaboration with BD

Zagreb (HR)

[Click here for information](#)



23-25 September 2020

XXII Serbian Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and 16th Belgrade Symposium for Balkan Region

Belgrade (SRB)

[Click here for information](#)

16-20 May

EuroMedLab 2021 - 24th IFCC-EFLM European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Munich (DE)

[Click here for information](#)



28 September - 1 October 2020

The 10th Santorini Conference "Systems medicine and personalised health & therapy" - The odyssey from hope to practice: Patient first - Keeps Ithaca always in your mind

Santorini (GR)

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10-11 June 2021

8th International Symposium on Critical Care Testing and Blood Gases

Biarritz (FR)

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