

IFCC Leaders Attend Young Scientists' Symposium at Jodhpur, India

Research in common parlance refers to a search for knowledge. One can also define research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. Thus, the purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures.

IFCC-Task Force Young Scientists (IFCC-TF YS) in collaboration with Association of Clinical Biochemists of India (ACBI) conducted a 5th Symposium on December 11, 2014, for young colleagues in laboratory medicine. The program was well attended by more than 100 participants from India and abroad, including senior members from the IFCC, APFCB & ACBI. The event was hosted by organizing committee ACBI Conference (ACBICON) 2014 and Dr. Praveen Sharma (Organizing Secretary). The event was organized at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Jodhpur (India).

This workshop covered the research process, an overview of qualitative and quantitative methods, data collection, recording and analysis and final output of a research proposal. It helped students to understand the basics of research process including the identification of a topic, preparation of a research proposal and final research report, assessment criteria for this and associated timelines. The concept of these activities is to encourage interactions and networking between young scientists along with education in the field of laboratory medicine and research. In India, with the collaborative efforts of ACBI and IFCC, the IFCC-TFYS has organized educational workshops and symposia every year in the National Conference, i.e., 2010, 2011, 2011, 2013 & 2014.

Addressing the conclave, Dr. Graham Beastall (President-IFCC) praised the Task Force initiatives and stressed upon the need to share experiences and strong networking activities. Dr. Jayashree Bhattacharjee (President ACBI) gave a welcoming addresses and summarized the ACBI initiatives for the young biochemists. Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dabla (Convener and Chair IFCC-TFYS) summarized the Task Force objectives, members & activities conducted. He assured the commitment of focused training and education to strengthen the fu-

Photo: Participants at the ACBICON-2014 symposium including IFCC President, Dr. Graham Beastall and IFCC President-elect, Dr. Maurizio Ferrari

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IFCC Beginner's Course in Molecular Diagnostics Held in Manila, Philippines

The IFCC Beginner's Course in Molecular Diagnostics is an initiative that is offered by the IFCC Clinical Molecular Biology Curriculum (C-CMBC) to all national societies'. This intense 6 day course teaches from the very basics to advanced molecular biology and is based on the idea that everything needed to perform basic Molecular Biology can fit into a suitcase and therefore would make it fairly inexpensive to perform Molecular Diagnostics all over the world. With the recent introduction of the IFCC junior member initiative, it also provides an opportunity for one member from each country visited to travel to the next, and help out in the practical sessions, network and gain some invaluable experience. In this way this course brings people from different countries together allowing them to experience each other's customs, make friends and network.

Preparation for this year's 6th Molecular Biology course started in May 2014, with announcements being sent to representatives of all IFCC member societies asking to express their interest in the course. Eight countries responded and expressed their interest in hosting the C-CMBC course. Applicants were then asked to attend the IFCC World Congress in Istanbul in June 2014 and to meet with the C-CMBC Committee members for further discussions. Two countries' representatives met with the committee members and after fruitful discussion it was decided to hold the next course in Manila, Philippines. Dr. Romeo Joseph Ignacio, president, and Dr. Leila Florento, former president of the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET), Manila, acted as local partner covering organizational issues. Dr. Florento was sent by the PAMET as a trainee to the Institute for Clinical Chemistry, in Mannheim, Germany to receive an introduction to the course and upon her return to the Philippines, she was instrumental in locating a suitable venue for the course and confirming that all laboratory and lecture room requirements were met.

The Course was held from December 14–19, 2014, at the United Laboratories, Inc. in Manila. At the official course start, the IFCC Tutors' group was welcomed by Dr. Ignacio and Dr. Florento. The course was attended

by 19 participants of heterogeneous professional backgrounds in molecular biology diagnostic skills ranging from "no idea" to "some DNA sequencing experience." The first day was dedicated to pre-course lectures, given by Dr. Andrea Ferreria-Gonzalez to bring everyone to the same level. On the first day it was announced that one participant would be chosen as an IFCC junior member based on his/her performance during all these days as well as on the results of the final written evaluation exam. Every morning thereafter started with an introductory lecture for the day's practical and ended off with informative and educational lectures from the C-CMBC tutors.

Students randomly divided themselves into 5 groups for the practical sessions and followed a detailed practical manual provided by C-CMBC and printed by PAMET. All participants were enthusiastic about the practicals, asked questions and performed all steps with precision and in record time, resulting in successful solution preparation, DNA isolation, performing PCR reactions, allelic-specific DNA amplification, hybridization, and computer-lab work which entailed gene identification in OMIM, variant analysis in SNPdp/SNPedia, primer design in Primer 3, NEB cutter for in silico restriction fragmentation analysis. This was the first time that a quantitative PCR experimental work was added in the course. More specifically, the basics and clinical applications potential of qPCR were introduced to participants, by giving a specific lecture on that topic, and by combining this lecture with CMV quantitation in DNA isolated from peripheral blood. The last day finished off with computer-lab work and state of the art lectures, followed by a 30 mark question paper, and course questionnaire and last but not least the IFCC-Certificate Ceremony, where each participant received an IFCC certificate of completion and a CD containing all



Photo: C-CMBC Course Tutors (from left to right: Dr. Parviz Ahmad-Nejad, Dr. Atsushi Watanabe, Dr. Evi Lianidou, Dr. Verena Haselmann, and Dr. Andrea Ferreira-Gonzalez).

the course lectures, practical videos, results from each practical session and photographs that were taken during the course. Thereafter, goodbyes were said with everyone going their separate ways and back to their respective countries.

The hospitality and organization of all PAMET board members was impeccable. Everything was very comfortable, friendly and well organized. C-CMBC tutors were hosted by PAMET board members almost every evening after the course. We would like to thank all participants for their enthusiasm, and all the PAMET board members for their excellent hospitality and perfect organization of the course. We would also like to thank all IFCC C-CMBC course² sponsors: Biorad, Eppendorf, Lesser-Loewe Foundation, and Roche Diagnostics for providing essential equipment and reagents.

References

- Lianidou et al, Advancing the education in molecular diagnostics: The IFCC-Initiative "Clinical Molecular Biology Curriculum" (C-CMBC); A ten year experience., Clin.Chim. Acta, 2014, Sep 25; 436:5-8
- IFCC C-CMBC Course Website: www.ifcc.org/ifcc-education-division/emd-committees/c-cmcb

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prospects of young laboratorians.

The first session was chaired by Dr. Maurizio Ferrari and Dr. Howard Morris. Dr. Graham Beastall initiated the session by sharing his academic experience in UK and worldwide as researcher and granting authority. He explained the increasing role of Health authorities in medicine. The future specialist in Lab Medicine will require a strong background in the basic medical sciences as well as highly developed clinical skills. It is needed to develop the robust Laboratory Medicine and clinical research programs to improve healthcare and wellness of the population. Next, Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dabla (Chair IFCC-TFYS) gave a basic Introduction to Research Design explaining what research is and its various steps in brief. Research process consists of series of actions or steps necessary to effectively carry out research and the desired sequencing of these steps. Research comprises of defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and at last carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis. Prof.

Venkat Parameswaran (School of Medicine, Univ. of Tasmania) continued detailing Literature Review using the Internet Support & Theoretical Approaches. He said "One of the most difficult steps when considering research is to choose a right topic of interest." This job of locating the background information through systematic literature review nowadays has been made easier through web-based "virtual library" facilities. Experimental approaches and analysis defines the information that is obtained.

Second session was chaired by Dr. Endang Ho-yaranda and Dr. Jayashree Bhattacharjee. Dr. Archana Singh (Assistant Professor, Biochemistry, AIIMS Delhi) described various quantitative and qualitative methods in detail. Generally, health science research follows the empirical approach, i.e., based upon observation and experience and deals with information of a quantitative nature. In either approach, statistical reasoning using the laws of probability guides the inferential process. Based on these calculated probabilities, the hypothesis is accepted or rejected. In end Dr. Graham Beastall guided how to draft a research proposal and fine details required. He said "The way in which a research proposal is structured and worded will have a significant impact

on its likely acceptance". He stressed on allowing plenty of time to prepare the submission. Formulate your research proposal into a hypothesis or series of questions informing the "Aims, Objectives and Outcomes" of your proposal to submit in time.

To summarize, the workshop has provided attendee's sufficient understanding of the major paradigms of qualitative and quantitative research and to provide a basis for further examination using preferred method. This session has provided a vision to understand the research process including the identification of a topic, preparation of a research proposal and final research report and associated assessment criteria to prepare research proposal. Following the success of this symposium the IFCC Executive Board is considering a new project to support YS to become involved with clinical and scientific research.

For more information and queries: Dr. Pradeep Kumar Dabla, MD, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Biochemistry, Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalya, Associated to Maulana Azad Medical College; and Assistant Prof., Department of Biochemistry G.B. Pant Hospital & Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education Research, Delhi, India Chair IFCC-TF YS, E-mail: pradeep_dabla@yahoo.com

Romania's Two Clinical Lab Societies Merge into A Single National Organization

by Ioana Brudasca, MD, PhD, RALM president

Laboratory medicine professionals in Romania were previously organized in two societies: the Romanian Society of Laboratory Medicine (SRML), member of IFCC, EFLM, WASPaLM, and the Romanian Association of Medical Laboratories (ALMR) affiliated member of IFCC and member of EFLM.

The members of both the organizations are medical doctors (specialists in Laboratory Medicine), biologists, biochemists, chemists, biophysicists.

As their goals are similar, in 2014 at the annual conferences of the two societies a step forward was achieved by taking the decision to create a unique, stronger society. A preliminary meeting took place in September 2014 and it was decided that the name of the new society will be the Romanian Association of Laboratory Medicine (RALM). A temporary board was nominated, which will be in charge until the first RALM Congress in May 20–23, 2015, when elections will be organized. The members of the temporary board are Associate Professor Dr. Ioana Brudasca (president), Dr. Camelia Grigore (vice president), Dr. Ileana Funduc (vice-president), Dr. Cristina Florescu Moraid (member), and Dr. Daniela Miricescu (secretary).

The main goal of RALM is to support a high quality healthcare management, thus establishing standards for scientific, technical, and ethical aspects of good laboratory practice.

As the clinical laboratory is an essential tool for clinical medicine, RALM will focus on the development and implementation of diagnostic tests.

In order to fulfill these objectives, RALM will continue the activities of the two former societies.

RALM will organize annual conferences and congresses under the auspices of IFCC and EFLM, in partnership with the Medical Faculties in Romania and with visiting lecturers supported by IFCC and EFLM. These meetings are an excellent opportunity for laboratory medicine specialists to benefit from the expertise of leading scientists, to identify issues they are confronted with in current practice and to provide solutions and guidelines on how to solve them. In order to stimulate our young colleagues, RALM will continue to grant two awards at every conference for the best poster presentation and for meritorious activity in the field of laboratory medicine.

The continuous Medical Education (CME) training courses for laboratory professionals organized until now will be continued, allowing our members to stay connected to the most recent professional issues.

The former ALMR already had its own publication, the Romanian Review of Laboratory Medicine (RRML), which publishes peer-reviewed original papers, general and professional reports of laboratory medicine. RRML is indexed in the ISI Web of Knowledge - Web of Science - Science Citation Index Expanded (Thomson Reuters Scientific), in the SCOPUS, and EMCARE databases since 2008, and in Index Copernicus since 2009, and a member of COPE since 2012. This journal will become RALM's publication, providing the opportunity for laboratory professionals to update their knowledge in the areas addressed.

We hope the new association will be more effective in accomplishing its tasks and will contribute to a stronger and more visible profession in Romania.

Uruguay's National Congress Scheduled for October 2015

The 10th Congress of Clinical Biochemistry, organized by the Uruguayan Association of Biochemistry (ABU), "Automation: Evolution, Technologies, and Strategies", will take place on October 22–24, 2015 at the Telecommunications Tower, in Montevideo (Uruguay).

The Organizing Committee of the 10th Congress of ABU is as follows: President: Rossana Pirotto; Vice president: Mercedes Castro; Secretary: Cecilia Queijo; Secretary: Lucila Pirez; Treasurer: Graciela Queiruga; Treasurer: Paola Audicio; Members: Laura Yametti, Beatriz Varela, Laura Godnjavec, Natalia Amor.

Scientific Committee: Chair: Graciela Borthagaray; Members: Cristina Servetto, Patricia Esperon, Stella Raymond, Graciela Queiruga and Ana Lena.

Themes: Assisted Reproduction; Drug Abuse; Quality Management; Microbiology; Microarrays and Sequencing of the Genome; Standardization.

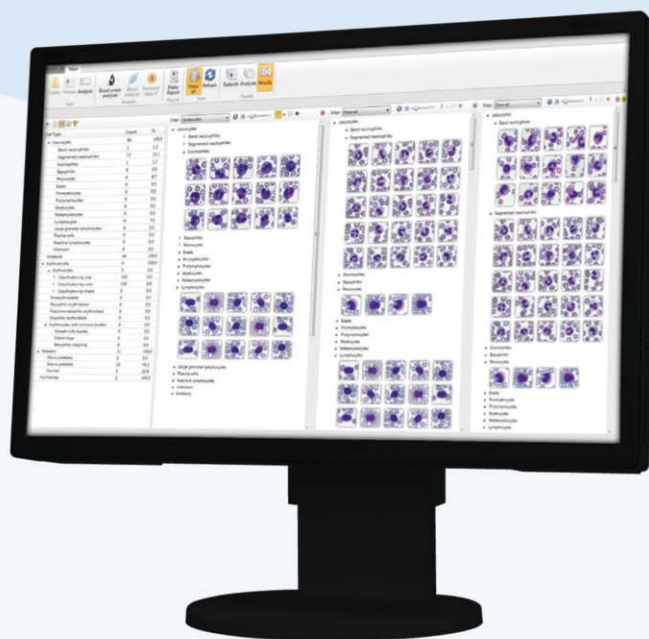
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Photo: Dr. Camelia Grigore (RSLM president) and the board of RALM at the 8th RALM conference in Sibiu 2014. From left to right: Dr. Minodora Dobreanu RALM board member, Dr. chem. Ileana Funduc RALM vicepresident, Dr. chem. Ariana Radulescu RALM treasurer, Dr. Ioana Brudasca RALM president, Dr. Camelia Grigore RSLM president.

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