

Highlights from the IFCC Scientific Division

This brief report aims at summarizing some of the issues in which the Scientific Division (SD) is presently involved regarding the functioning of its Committees (C) and Working Groups (WG). Usually, a C is theme-oriented (broad subjects which may necessitate collaboration with National or International Organizations) and consist of five full members including the chair and may have as many corresponding members as are nominated by National Societies and IFCC Corporate Members. The WGs are task-oriented (e.g., development of reference measurement procedures, production of reference materials, etc.) and the number of members may vary. A new C or WG is established when a well defined project proposed by members of National Societies or Corporate Members is accepted. The SD Executive Committee is looking forward to receiving at all time well defined projects within his mandate. The project can be totally new or it can be a project that was first initiated by one of the National Societies that would benefit the International Community in Laboratory Medicine.

Currently, 8 Cs and 8 WGs are operating (Table 1). Over the last year, calls for nominations have been made for renewing the membership on 3 Cs: Standardisation of Markers of Cardiac Damage (C-SMCD), Standardisation of Coagulation Tests (C-SCT), and Molecular Biology Techniques in Clinical Chemistry (C-MBT). For C-SMCD, two new members have been appointed: F. Pagani (IT) and J. Tate (AU). The C-SCT is presently revising its orientations and three new members have been appointed: A. Ruf (DE), E.M. Vahtera (FI), and J. Lahav (IS). The C-MBT has been renamed Committee on Molecular Diagnostics (C-MD) and a new chair has been appointed, F. Rousseau (CN) in replacement of C. Mannhalter (AT) who has terminated her second term. Four members were appointed: M. Pazzagli (IT), C. Mamotte (AU), R. Van Schaik (NT), and D. Lo (HK). The C-MD is redefining its orientations to respond to the new challenges in this rapidly growing domain. Three Cs have a new chair, G. Merlini (IT) replacing M. Johnson (USA) for the Committee on Plasma Proteins (C-PP), F.S. Apple (USA) replacing M. Panteghini (IT) in C-SMCD, and G. Schumann (DE) replacing L. Siekmann (DE) for the Committee on Reference Systems of Enzymes (C-RSE).

Two new Cs were also established following the calls for Nominations of February 2004. These are the Committee on Point of Care Testing (C-POCT) and the Committee on Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (C-TLM). The membership of C-POCT is as follows: W. Külpmann (DE) (chair), N. Fogh-Andersen (DK), A. St-John (AU), C. Ritter (AT), and M.C. Benrayanna (TU). The terms of reference of this new C are: - To contribute to the development of international standards for POCT; - To make recommendations on quality assessment of glucose measurements in different health settings; - To establish parameters of utilisation of POCT and to device evidence-based approaches of clinical utilisation. The membership of C-TLM is: L. Siekmann (DE) (chair), C.W. Chen (China), C. Cobbaert (NT), R. Miller (USA), and L. Thienpont (BE). The terms of references of this new C are: - To prepare state of the art position statements regarding traceability in Laboratory Medicine permitting IFCC to play its international role in this area and providing an operating link between SD and WGs of the Joint Committee on Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (JCTLM) and others, such as National Committee of Clinical Laboratory Standardization (NCCLS), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Institute of Reference Materials and Methods (IRMM); - To monitor the implementation of new international directives and relevant standards, such as the European IVD Directive 98/79, ISO 17511, etc.; - To approve reference laboratories in the context of complete reference systems (i.e., accepted reference measurement procedures of higher order, reference materials, and reference laboratories); - To establish External Quality Assessment Schemes (EQAS) for reference laboratories for monitoring competence by participating in comparative measurement campaigns ("ring trials").

To know more about the current activities of each C and WG, one can consult the executive summary of the minutes of SD available on the IFCC website (www.ifcc.org) after each SD meeting.

Table 1

Synopsis of Committees and Working Groups active in IFCC Scientific Division

COMMITTEE	CHAIR
Committee on Nomenclature, Properties and Units (C-NPU)	Dr. U. Forsum (SW)
Committee on Molecular Diagnostics (C-MD)	Dr. F. Rousseau (CN)
Committee on Plasma Proteins (C-PP)	Prof. G. Merlini (IT)
Committee on Standardization of Markers of Cardiac Damage (C-SMCD)	Dr. F. Apple (USA)
Committee on Standardization of Coagulation Tests (C-SCT)	Dr. C. Jackson (USA)
Committee on Reference Systems of Enzymes (C-RSE)	Dr. G. Schumann (DE)
Committee on Point of Care Testing (C-POCT)	Dr. W.R. Külpmann (DE)
Committee on Traceability in Laboratory Medicine (C-TLM)	Prof. L. Siekmann (DE)
WORKING GROUP	CHAIR
Working Group on Apolipoproteins (WG-MA)	Dr. G R Cooper/Dr. G.L. Myers (USA)
Working Group on Standardization of Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (WG-SHCG)	Dr. C. Sturgeon (UK)
Working Group on Standardization of HbA1c (WG-HbA1c)	Dr. K. Miedema (NL)
Working Group on Nanotechnology (WG-NT)	Dr. L. Kricka (USA)
Working Group on Monitoring Immunosuppressive Drugs (WG-MID)	Dr. D. Holt (UK)
Working Group on Standardization of Homocysteine (WG-SHM)	Dr. E. Rossi (AU)
Working Group on Standardization of Thyroid Function Tests (WG-STFT)	Dr C. Ronin (FR)
Working Group on Standardization of Hemoglobin A2 (WG-SHbA2)	Prof. A. Mosca (IT)

Prepared by Mauro Panteghini, Vice-Chair of IFCC Scientific Division