

## SFBC: Beyond the Headlines

by Dr. Bernard Gouget

SFBC-EFLM Representative; IFCC Treasurer;  
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of Clinical Biology and Laboratory Medicine (FIFBCML)

Société Française de Biologie Clinique (The French Society of Clinical Biology, SFBC) with its president, Joëlle Goudable, and the Annales de Biologie Clinique (ABC), will celebrate their 73rd anniversary in 2015. In 1942, at the initiative of Michel Polonovski, professor at the Paris Faculty of Medicine and two representatives of private laboratory organizations, Dr. Daniel Durupt for physicians and Georges Schuster for pharmacists created the French Society of Clinical Biology. Prof. M. Polonovski was the first president of this scientific society with the aim of bringing together laboratory medicine specialists or pharmacists from all specialties and types of practice combined. Then, Marcel Paget, the archivist, started collecting scientific papers. And so the *Annales de Biologie Clinique* was born, of which he was the first editor-in-chief. This jour-

nal is currently published by John Libbey with Jean-Louis Beaudeau as the editor-in-chief. Before the computer and internet era, there was a newsletter "*L'Information Scientifique du Biologiste [Scientific Information for the Biologist]*" edited from 1975 to 1993 by Alain Legrand\* who served as a liaison to the ABC to ensure very practical information to the profession.

### The mission of the SFBC is to:

- Reflect on the practice of medical biology in respect of the diversity of types of practice, and on methods of evaluating professional practices;
- Promote and foster continuing professional development (continuing medical education, evaluating the professional practices of laboratory medicine specialists, accreditation);
- Initiate laboratory medicine studies and issue recommendations



to contribute to the quality of care;

- Share its opinions with institutions, agencies and government services.

The SFBC is administered by a board of directors composed of 21 members elected by the general assembly. The board of directors elects a bureau composed of the president, who is chosen alternately from among doctors or pharmacists, two vice-presidents, the secretary general and the treasurer. On the proposal of the president, the former president is invited to sit on the bureau in an advisory capacity. Project leaders are designated by the bureau for specific actions: congresses and conferences, international relations, e-learning, etc. The scientific committee identifies and coordinates working themes such as accreditation, the biomarkers of vascular calcification in chronic renal failure, prostate cancer biomarkers, cardiac biomarkers, the role of mass spectrometry in laboratory medicine, prospects in pharmacogenomics and predictive medicine, and continuing professional development. Watch groups are dedicated to forward planning.

The SFBC holds Journées Scientifiques Nationales (National Science Days) as part of the Journées Internationales de Biologie (Annual Meeting of Medical Biology, JIB). The JIB was created in 1955 by the Association des pharmaciens directeurs de laboratoire d'analyses (Association of Directors of Pharmacist-Directors of Analytical Laboratories, APDILA), ancestor of the Syndicat des Biologistes (Union of Biologists, SDB), they have, over the years, built the Journées de Lariboisière (International Biology Days) then developed a salon with Reed Expositions France as professional congress organizer. The SFBC leads the scientific committee along with various learned societies and historical partners: The Journées Biologiques de Lariboisière (International Biology Days, JBL), INSERM, Société Francophone Vitamines et Biofacteurs (French Society for Vitamins and Biofactors, SFVB), the Société Francophone d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Eléments Toxiques et Essentiel (French Society for Study and Research on Toxic and Essential Elements, SFERETE) and Biologie Moléculaire Initiatives (Molecular Biology Initiatives, BioMI).

The SFBC is present and active internationally. Paul FLEURY and Jean-Emile Courtois also contributed to the creation of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry, IFCC in 1952 that J.E. Courtois presided over from 1963 to 1967 as did Gérard Siest from 1991 to 1996. Pierre Valdiguie was president of FESCC (1989-1993), Bernard Gouget, EFLM representative (2003-2015), directed the IFCC Communication and Publication Division from 1997 to 2003 before joining the IFCC Executive Board as of 2008 and treasurer since 2011. Philippe Gillery, IFCC representative, has been the vice-chair of the Scientific Division since 2011. More than twenty SFBC members are IFCC or EFLM officers. Simone Zerah has been very active in EC4 to promote harmonization of professional training and qualifications. Guilaine Boursier currently leads IFCC/SFBC young scientists.

The SFBC had the initiative in 2007 to create the Fédération Internationale Francophone de Biologie Clinique et de Médecine de Laboratoire (French International Federation for Clinical Biology and Laboratory Medicine, FIFBCML) The founding members are the SFBC, the Association Algérienne des Laboratoires d'Analyses Médicales (Algerian Association of Medical Analysis Laboratories, AALAM), Syndicat des Biologistes Libanais (Lebanese Syndicate of Biologists, SBL), the Société Marocaine de Chimie Clinique (Moroccan Society of Clinical Chemistry, SMCC) and the Société Tunisienne de Biologie Clinique (Tunisian Society of Clinical Biology, STBC). The honorary president is Prof. Alain Legrand.

Several collaborations are already in place with AACC: AACC- Lab-Tests-on-Line (LTO) (Véronique Ducros et Jean Pierre Bali); AACC-Clinical Chemistry trainee council; Translation in French of Articles published in Clinical Chemistry; Joint meetings with the AACC POCT and critical care division at the 5th International Symposium "Critical Care Testing and Blood Gases" in Deauville 2012 and a joint session is planned in Versailles in June 2015.

SFBC is organizing EuroMedLab Paris 2015 (June 21-25). EuroMedLab Paris 2015 will be the "R-evolution in Lab Medicine" linking scientific and other evidence to shape tomorrow's development in the field of Lab Medicine and global Health placing the patient at the heart of all our efforts and discussions. We look forward for your participation in the fascinating scientific networking event and welcoming you all for a memorable and enjoyable experience!

\* Thanks to A. Legrand for the useful information about the history of SFBC.

  
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## 10th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region Held in Belgrade on September 9-13

by Dr. Snezana Jovicic, Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia

The end of summer and first days of autumn are the traditional season for Belgrade meetings of medical biochemists of Serbia. This year, September 9–13, 2014, were the days of the 19th National Congress of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and of the 10th EFLM Symposium for the Balkan Region. The Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia and the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM) together with the Medical Biochemistry Clinical Center of Serbia, and Faculty of Pharmacy University of Belgrade organized in Belgrade (September 11–12, 2014) the 10th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region under the title “*Pediatric Laboratory Medicine: Some Aspects of Obesity, Metabolic Syndrome, Neonatal Screening, Reference Intervals and Critical Values.*” EFLM appointed Belgrade (Serbia) and the Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia (SMBS) as the organizer of educational symposia for clinical chemists in the Balkan region and as a result of this decision ten symposia have been organized thus far very successfully. The 10th EFLM Symposium for Balkan Region is organized under the auspices of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC), Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF), as well as the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, and Ministry of Health of Republic of Serbia. The Scientific Committee members were Symposium President Nada Majkic-Singh (Serbia), Edgard Delvin (Canada), Elizabeta Topic (Croatia), Grazyna Sypniewska (Poland), and Svetlana Ignjatovic (Serbia).

The Symposium lectures were presented through three sections: Pediatric Obesity – Insulin Resistance – Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD); Neonatal Screening for Metabolic Disease (two parts); and Pediatric Reference Intervals and Critical Values. The lecturers were from Canada (2), Italy (2), Macedonia (2), Serbia (5), UK (1), Hungary (1), Slovenia (1), France (1), and Sweden (1). The papers of the lectures presented were published in *Journal of Medical Biochemistry* 2015;34:1-150 ([www.degruyter.com/view/j/jomb](http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/jomb)). Special thanks of the organizers go to Prof. Edgard Delvin (Montreal Children’s Hospital, McGill University, Montreal, Canada) who helped to design the program of the symposium, and suggested the topics and lecturers.

The first section of the symposium was dedicated to pediatric obesity, insulin resistance and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Prof. Delvin gave the introduction with the lecture about the prevalence, secular trends and consequences of obesity, where he also mentioned the fundamentals of

epidemiology and pathophysiology of NAFLD, and covered the present biomarkers and the development of new ones. Prof. Valerio Nobili (Bambino Gesù Children’s Hospital, Rome, Italy) continued with the epidemiology and natural history of NAFLD, elaborating on the complex interplay between genes and the environment in NAFLD pathogenesis, and the possibility of discovering the potential early predictors and suitable noninvasive diagnostic tools based on the pathogenetic mechanisms and histological patterns. Metabolic setup and risks in obese children was discussed by Prof. Mirjana Kocova (University Pediatric Clinic, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia). Prof. Kocova presented results of several studies in obese children of different ages performed in the Republic of Macedonia, which showed higher leptin and lower adiponectin levels in obese children, who also presented with a more atherogenic lipoprotein profile, associated with increased insulin resistance, emphasizing the need for the onset of therapy preventing cardiovascular complications at a younger age. Prof. Vera Zdravkovic closed the first section with the talk about the importance of early diagnosis of pre-diabetes, as early complication of childhood obesity, and non-invasive methods to perform it. The second section was dedicated to the neonatal screening for metabolic disorders. The opening lecture by Prof. Rodney Pollitt (Sheffield Children’s Hospital, UK) reviewed different viewpoints and international perspectives on newborn screening, which was an excellent introduction for the issues in standardization of neonatal screening programs presented by Prof. Alberto Burlina (University of Padua, Italy). Prof. Istvan Balogh (Department of Laboratory Medicine, University of Debrecen, Hungary) talked about the relevance of adding the detection of population-specific mutations to commercial allele specific CFTR gene mutation detection method in order to achieve the required sensitivity of molecular testing in newborn screening. The first part of the section was closed with Serbian experiences in screening in the prevention of Thalassemia syndromes, presented by Dr. Milica Cvorkov-Drazic (Society of Medical Biochemists of Serbia). The second part continued with the presentation of results of the study of direct molecular diagnosis of CYP21A2 point mutations in Macedonian and Serbian patients with 21-hydroxylase deficiency by Prof. Violeta Anastasovska (Genetic Laboratory, Department of Endocrinology and Genetics, University Children’s Clinic, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia). Prof. Barbka Repic Lampert (Unit for Special Laboratory Diagnostics, University Chil-



Photo: (From left to right) Sitting: N. Majkic-Singh, Z. Sumarac, M. Cvorkov-Drazic; standing: I. Balogh, E. Delvin, R. Pollitt, A. Burlina

dren Hospital, University Medical Center Ljubljana, Slovenia) presented the selective screening for metabolic disorders in a Slovenian pediatric population. The section dedicated to newborn screening was closed by Dr. Tatjana Milenkovic (Department of Endocrinology, Mother and Child Health Care Institute of Serbia “Dr. Vukan Cupic,” Belgrade, Serbia), who presented their 30 years’ experience with the screening program for congenital hypothyroidism in Central Serbia (1983–2014). The Symposium was closed with current issues in pediatric reference intervals and critical values. Prof. Joseph Henry (Versailles Saint Quentin University, Villejuif, France) introduced the concepts and complexity in establishing reference values in pediatrics. Afterwards, Prof. Khosrow Adeli (Clinical Biochemistry, The Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto, Canada) discussed the concept and feasibility of common reference intervals, as well as the CALIPER reference interval database. Finally, the

section and the whole symposium was concluded by Prof. Peter Ridefelt (Department of Medical Sciences, Clinical Chemistry, Uppsala University, Sweden), who presented the results of a population-based Swedish study which obtained pediatric reference intervals, and emphasized the problem of lacking reference intervals for the youngest age group – those under six months of age.

The design of the program of this symposium enabled the laboratory professionals in the Balkan region and our country to learn about this very important area of laboratory medicine. The presence of excellent lecturers and professionals in this field gives very high recognition and prestige to this meeting, which will influence the development of clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine in the Balkan region. We hope that the EFLM Symposium in Belgrade will continue its successful progress like in previous years, striving to focus on the new data in the field of laboratory medicine.

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## In Memoriam: Prof. Rick Jones, Innovative Informatics Visionary

A farewell note from ACB (UK) by Gifford Batstone (DoH) and Ian Barnes (Leeds)

Prof. Rick Jones was a leading figure in the development of health informatics, particularly in the field of pathology. He was a crucial influencer in the development of the pathology network based in the Leeds area and co-founded the Yorkshire Center for Health Informatics (YCHI) at the University of Leeds.

Rick was a delightful person with a mischievous sense of humor as well as being a polymath who combined academic excellence with rock climbing, mountain walking and musical talent as a bass guitarist. It was apparent from his time at Manchester Grammar School that he was academically gifted and he also joined in a wide range of school activities and developed the strong socialist principles that guided the rest of his life.

Rick won a place at Corpus Christi, Oxford to study medicine, qualifying in 1978. Following house officer posts he obtained membership of the Royal College of Physicians in 1980 before embarking on research as an MRC Training Fellow

in the Nuffield Department of Medicine in Oxford working with Prof. Dermot Williamson. He gained a DM for his studies on Insulin Metabolism in Mammary Lactogenesis in 1988.

In May 1983 he moved to Leeds as Tutor in Medicine and in 1985 transferred to a career in Chemical Pathology as a Senior Registrar before gaining the posts of Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine, University of Leeds and Honorary Consultant Chemical Pathologist, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust in 1990.

As Head of Chemical Pathology and Immunology Services at Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust 1992-2004, working with Dr. Ian Barnes, the department grew to be among the largest in the UK following mergers between the United Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, the Bradford Teaching Hospitals Trust and the St James University Hospitals Trust. During this time he was responsible for the development of the integrated IT services for pathology and retained responsibility for strategic IT issues in the Pathol-

ogy Directorate in his later academic role. The University of Leeds awarded him a Chair in Chemical Pathology and Health Informatics in 2014 in recognition of his work in chemical pathology, informatics and education.

### National Informatics Issues

With the NHS Information Authority, Rick helped engineer the introduction of the national system for electronic reporting of laboratory data to GPs – the Pathology Messaging Implementation Program (PMIP) – a system that sends 50 million messages a year. The PMIP system includes standards for information content, structure, management and security of electronic pathology reports messaging between laboratories and GPs. It has been operational since 2000 and has been implemented across the whole of the NHS. Building on the lessons from PMIP, Rick was the originator of the concept of a National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue (a vision for a BNF equivalent for laboratory/diagnostic tests), which is expected to underpin future data exchange in the NHS using SNOMED-CT and HL7 coding. This work continues as collaboration between NHS England, The Pathology Catalogues Executive Team at the College, X-Lab, and the Health and Social Care Information Center (HSCIC).

Rick was instrumental in overseeing the specification and roll-out of a common IT system for genetics laboratories in the UK which is providing a standardized, modern platform for the expanding field of DNA and cytogenetic testing. His group has developed software used by a number of diagnostic companies for clinical decision support, statistical analysis and control of QA schemes for extra-laboratory point-of-care testing. He has been involved in a number of UK and international informatics projects including the NHS Clinical Terms Project and the formation of the UK National Institute for Health Informatics.



### The Future is Bright... and Full of Young People

Rick pioneered the use of population data to produce a diagnostic atlas of the utilization of pathology tests in primary care, to audit the standardization of pathology messages, and to create population based reference ranges. A different side of Rick has been seen at pathology-related gigs playing his bass guitar and he was central to organizing the Focus Fringe at the ACB's annual meeting. He was a founder member of *Blues Positive*, a four-piece band in the Leeds and Bradford scene formed in 2004 and playing up-tempo Chicago blues at a wide range of pubs, clubs and festivals.

All his friends and colleagues have admired his fortitude in continuing to pursue his vision despite a ten year struggle with myeloma. He has always been generous with his time and experience in helping both students on the YCHI MSc course, believing that bright young people can change the world, and those much more senior. Through YCHI and Leeds Medical School he has influenced a generation of students and leaves behind a cohort of disciples to carry forward his vision.

Rick was a highly principled man of the utmost integrity who had a vision of the role of informatics in healthcare that he pursued with boundless enthusiasm, eternal optimism, self-effacing modesty and a rather mischievous wry smile. Although pathology has lost one of its great innovators, his vision and innovative ideas will steer many future developments.

## EFLM Welcomes The Macedonian Society as New Member

We are pleased to inform you that EFLM has a new Full Member: the Macedonian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine. The Executive Board of the Macedonian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine is composed of the following: Danica Labudovik (President), Svetlana Cekovska (Secretary), Sonja Piponska Trojancanec (Treasurer), Violeta Filipce (MD-member), Biserka Simonovska (Ph-member), Branko Jaglikovski (MD-mem-

ber) and Oliver Georgievski (MD-member). Prof. Sonja Kuzmanovska will act as EFLM National Representative. On behalf of the EFLM Executive Board and the EFLM General Assembly we extend a warm welcome to the Macedonian Society of Medical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine and wish a fruitful collaboration in EFLM.

With the inclusion of Macedonia, now EFLM counts 41 Members representing 40 European countries.



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