

Edited by Andreas Rothstein M.

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ISO/TC 212 IN PHILADELPHIA, JUNE 14-16, 2000

The ISO/TC 212 will have its annual plenary meeting in Philadelphia June 14-16 2000. ISO Technical Committee 212, 'Clinical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems'; ISO/TC 212 has 90 members worldwide and carries out its tasks through three working groups (WG): WG 1: Quality management in the medical laboratory, WG 2: Reference systems and WG 3: In vitro diagnostic products. The major task of ISO is to define, write, endorse and maintain voluntary standards. ISO works in all areas and the number of standards that are created, available and used is overwhelming. The ISO National Adhering Organizations (NAO) recruits national representatives to the ISO Technical Committees. Only the NAOs can appoint participants to the TC but of course the NAO can be made aware of the need for a national representative. In many cases the NAOs do not seem to identify clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine and therefore the national and professional input to the TC 212 may not have been as large as it would otherwise have been. Presently, 29 nations are represented on the TC as full members and 9 as 'correspondent' members. The participation in ISO work is always paid by the individual nation, i.e. ISO does not contribute to participation. Of importance are some items that will be dealt at the event: The final versions of the Standards on laboratory management and on safety in the laboratory (WG 1), Standards on Traceability of Calibrators and the Standard on Reference Laboratories (WG2) and Standards for performance criteria for blood glucose meters and point of care testing of anticoagulant therapy, and a new Guide for the determination of analytical performance goals (WG3). The TC 212 works in close relation with the CEN (European Committee for Standardization) and its Technical Committee 140. For several work items the ISO is in the lead and CEN monitoring and vice versa. For information, contact Anders Kallner MD, PhD. Dept Clin Chem. Karolinska Hospital. S-171 76 Stockholm, SWEDEN. Phone: +46 (0) 8 5177 49 43. Fax: + 46 (0) 8 5177 28 99. E-mail: anders.kallner@lab.ks.se

FAREWELL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF IFCC

M. J. McQueen, comments to all national societies, corporate members and affiliate members of IFCC, some thoughts on the three years (1997-1999) as president of IFCC. He is thankful for putting the strategic plan into action y the

financial support from the National Societies and Corporate Members. The IFCC has grown to 78 member countries and its corporate member base has become wider. The scientific reputation of the Federation has grown, especially in the areas of standardization and reference materials. It has improved scientific cooperation with other international laboratory professional organizations. The Education and Management Division has maintained its role in analytical quality and has expanded the IFCC role further into the pre-analytical and post-analytical phases. The Communications and Publications Divisions has restructured itself to meet the challenges of electronic publication and is now ready to benefit from this. The creation of the Congress and Conference Division was recognition of the importance of these activities to the IFCC and to our national and corporate members. Some of the other highlights in the past three years include the very important change of name to the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine, highlighting the clinical relevance and importance of our profession. The Statutes of the Federation have been changed to limit the amount of time any one person can spend on the Executive Board. Representatives of the corporate members have been formally included in the structure of each of our Divisions. It has also been clearly demonstrated that the Triennial Congress will rotate to different parts of the world. The Board accepted the responsibility of presenting a financial plan that would move towards the end of deficit budgets which has been put in place. As an end of the millenium gift to its members, the Board has concluded discussions with the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (WASP) and has published the "Principles of Clinical Laboratory Accreditation" where it says that a laboratory can be directed by a scientist or physician with the appropriate initial qualifications and with specialized post-graduate professional education and training in clinical laboratory work, which is vitally important for its members. None of this would have been possible without the professional and dedicated support of the IFCC Technical Secretariat. The complexity of the Federation has increased. The need to move to a larger and even stronger Head Office structure has been accepted by the Board. Professor McQueen trusts that under the leadership of Professor Mathias Müller, the next Executive Board will work hard to meet the needs and expectations of the National Societies and further expand the vision and role of the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine. Finally, Professor McQueen, on behalf of the Board, wants to thank the Member Societies for having given them the opportunity to both lead and serve.

WHAT PEOPLE WILL DO FOR FUN AND SCIENCE

Dr. Carl A. Burtis, vice-president of the IFCC, forwarded an anecdote of several members of the Finnish Society of Clinical Chemistry. "Our society has a tradition, since about 20 years ago, to have a symposium on a ferry boat from Helsinki to Stockholm. We have lectures on boat in the afternoons from about 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The boat leaves Helsinki at 5 p.m. and we arrive in Stockholm next morning. In Stockholm we usually visit a biggest exhibition of clinical chemistry in Scandinavia. We usually have also a couple of hours for shopping. The lectures begin again in the afternoon. Both evenings we have dinners on board and of course, there is dancing and nightclub and some other activities. Tax-free shopping is very important! Well, this symposium is usually in the beginning of December, when sometimes the weather can be really rough. So far, during the past ten years we have been lucky and only once the weather was somewhat stormy. This year the weather was really stormy. The wind was blowing at the speed of 25 m/s when we left! I think that only a couple of people cancelled their trip because of the weather. This year we had more members than for years to participate in this symposium, there were 143 of our 450 members present. Everybody knew that the night could be very rough so many people did take antihistamine to prevent seasickness. We did get through our program quite without problems, and we did manage to finish our dinner before the ferry started really rocking. Everything was okay for me as long as I did sit at the table. But once I did get up on my feet, I started feeling that I should go to my cabin. I left quite early and was lying on my bed with my clothes on. I was OK when lying, but as soon as I did get up I was feeling terrible. So I did "sleep" till morning. We were supposed to arrive in Stockholm at 9 a.m. and there were busses waiting for us to take us to the exhibition. I did get up in time to go for breakfast and some shopping. I looked out from the window and was thinking that this does not look like Stockholm. At 8:45 a.m. I heard an announcement that we were arriving in Marieham. Marieham is a town half way from Helsinki to Stockholm and we should have stopped there at 4 a.m. So we were 5 hours late. And at breakfast I heard that the wind had been blowing at a speed of 35 m/s and it was a sidewind! Can you imagine that? The ferry was really rocking and the waves had been 12 m high (about 35 feet)! Some people told that they had not slept as well as that night for ages and others were ready to quickly get out. And some other brave people had been trying to dance in the nightclub till 4 a.m. I was sort of sleeping in my cabin. On the way back to Helsinki to wind was still blowing 25 m/s but now it was coming from the behind and we did not feel a thing. It was quite an experience".