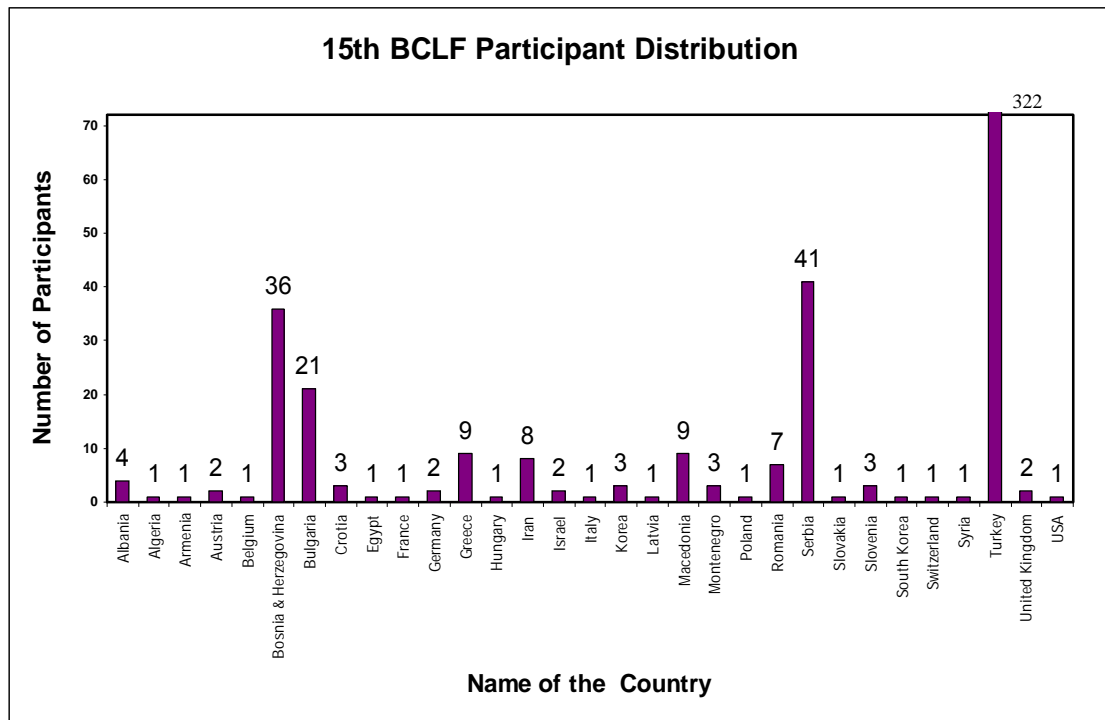


15TH MEETING OF BALKAN CLINICAL LABORATORY FEDERATION

The 15th Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation (BCLF) Meeting was held on September 4-7, 2007 in Antalya, Turkey. Organized by the Turkish Biochemical Society (TBS) under the auspices of the International and European Federations of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC and EFCC), the Meeting attracted 490 participants (322 from Turkey, 133 from the other Balkan countries and 35 from the rest of the world). The participant distribution is depicted in Figure 1. The scientific program included 24 lectures (four in the form of a “Round Table Discussion on Continuing Education”), 32 oral and 249 poster presentations.



The Meeting started with welcoming addresses from Professors Nazmi Özer (Meeting President and President of TBS), Nada Majkic-Singh (President of BCLF), Victor Blaton (President of EFCC) and Jocelyn Hicks (President of IFCC).

Professor Hicks' Opening Lecture, “*Laboratory Medicine, Past, Present and Future*”, an overview of the incredible advances in clinical chemistry in the last 50 years, was received with great interest by the attending body. The Welcome Cocktail which followed, and was held in the swimming pool area with a view of both the sea and the purple Aladağ stretch of the Taurus Mountains, served to mingle the participants in warm conversation.

The program on September 5 focused on the importance of knowledge and experience. The first lecture, delivered by Professor Mathias Mueller (past president of IFCC), dealt with “*Diagnostic Guidelines – A Service for Clinicians and Patients*”. Professor Victor Blaton (EFCC President) lectured on “*Targeting HDL for Prevention and Management of Cardiovascular Disease*”, followed by Professor Gabor Kovacs' (FESCC member at large) delivery on “*Posterior and Intermediate Pituitary Lobes: Neuroendocrine, Clinical and Diagnostic Implications*”.

The Program proceeded with lectures by Professor Israel Pecht (FEBS General Secretary) on “*Regulation of Mast Cell Mediator Secretion – Hope for Allergy Treatment*” and Professor Manole Cojocararu on “*Anca-Associated Vasculitis in Ischemic Stroke and Hepatitis*”.

The Panel on “*Molecular Diagnostics in Clinical Practice*”, moderated by Professor Pinar Özand, highlighted recent trends in molecular diagnostics with presentations from 3 distinguished scientists: Professors Michael Fountoulakis (Roche, Basel, Switzerland), Michel Eichenbaum (Dr. Margarete Fischer-Bosch Institute, Stuttgart, Germany) and Fikret Erdoğan (MPI, Berlin, Germany) respectively focused on clinical proteomics in “*Discovery of Biomarkers in Diagnostic Industry*”, pharmacogenomics in “*From Gene to Patient: Towards Individualized Drug Therapy*” and DNA chips in “*High Resolution Array Comparative Genomic Hybridization: Application and Experiences*”.

IFCC President Professor Jocelyn Hicks and EFCC President Professor Victor Blaton attending the BCLF Board Meeting, held as parallel session to the oral and poster presentations, during the Congress, expressed their appreciation of the progress of BCLF and promised continued support in developing relations between the federations.

The “*Molecular Diagnostics in Clinical Practice*” panel was followed by oral and poster presentations by young investigators. The day closed with a Wine and Cheese party in the exquisitely impressive historical atmosphere of Antalya Museum.

The scientific program resumed on September 6 and was enriched with the following contributions of invited scientists from Balkan countries:

Professor Yahya Laleli (Duzen Laboratories, Ankara, Turkey) - “*Target Value for Inaccuracy and Importance of Harmonization*”, Professor Ana Stavljenic-Rukavina (Zagreb, Croatia) - “*Management of Risk in Laboratory Practice*”, Professor Danica Popovic-Pribilovic (Podgorica, Montenegro) - “*Rational Laboratory Diagnostics and Possibilities of Inadequate Analysis Application*”, Professor Pika Mesko Brguljan (Ljubljana, Slovenia) - “*The Initial Experiences in Auditing of Quality Management Implementation in Slovenia*”, Professor Demetrios Rizos (Athens, Greece) - “*New Perspectives in Antenatal Screening for Down’s Syndrome*”, Professor Etleva Refatllari (Tirana, Albania) - “*The Prevalence of Beta-Thalassemia in Students Screening Lushnja District*”, Professor Adlija Jevric-Causevic (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) - “*Prediction of Type II Diabetes: New Diagnostic Perspectives*”, Professor Anna Vassileva Tzontcheva (Sofia, Bulgaria) - “*Abdominal Obesity, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Risk*”.

The Round Table Discussion: “*Continuing Education*” was moderated by Professors Nada Majkic-Singh and Eser Yıldırım Sözmen (IFCC Educational Committee Member). The contributors and the topics they covered were: Professor Angeliki Stahati-Ferdeigou (Athens, Greece) - “*The Greek Experience*”; Professor Nada Majkic-Singh (Belgrade, Serbia) - “*Serbian Experience in Continuing medical Education*”; Valentina Koloska (Skopje, Macedonia) - “*Organization of Continuing Medical Education in Laboratory Medicine in Republic of Macedonia*”; Professor Doğan Yücel (Ankara, Turkey) - “*Continuing Education and Training of Specialists of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine in Turkey*”. Professor Victor Blaton (EFCC President) also attended to the RTD and gave information about EFCC approach for this matter.

The Closing Lecture, delivered by Professor Svetlana Ignjatovic, recounted a collaborative study of Professors Ignjatovic and Nada Majkic-Singh on “*Biomarkers for Cardiovascular Disease: Evidence-Based Considerations*” and was followed by a survey by Professor Stoyan Danev of the founding period and “*15 Years of BCLF*”.

The Meeting was closed by Professors Singh and Özer with invitations to the Gala Dinner in the evening and to the 16th BCLF Meeting to be held in Athens in 2008.

The Gala Dinner gave the participants an opportunity to relax, socialize and dance to the sound of music. A further attraction was the presentation of Balkan Awards. Sponsored by Biosystems, the Awards will be a feature of future BCLF Meetings as well. This year the Balkan Award was given to Marica Markovic (Belgrade, Serbia) for work entitled “*Short-term*”.

hyperthermia prevents activation of proinflammatory genes in fibroblast-like synoviocytes by blocking activation of the transcription factor nf-kb"; the Finalist Prize went to Christina Kostara (Ioannina, Greece) for "Investigation of lipidemic profile in patients with coronary heart disease (CHD) by proton nuclear magnetic resonance (^1H NMR) spectroscopy and pattern recognition techniques".

The last day of the Meeting featured tours to near-by historical sites including Perge, Aspendos and Antalya city tour, after which the group bade farewell, looking forward to meet in Athens the coming year.

Professor Nazmi Özer,
President of the Turkish Biochemical Society

Professor Nada Majkić-Singh,
President of the Balkan Clinical Laboratory Federation



Photo: (from left to right)
Nada Majkić-Singh, Nazmi Özer, Marica Marković,
Xavier Palomer, Christina Kostara