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## Minutes EASI Forum

Nice, March 28, 2014; 12:00 – 13:45 h

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**Participants:** Yehuda Shoenfeld (IL), Luis Andrade (BR), Maria Orietta Borghi (IT), Ricard Cervera (ES), Edward K.L. Chan (US), Valentyna Chopyak (UA), Jan-Willem Cohen-Tervaert (NL), Jan Damoiseaux (NL), Ulrike Demel (AT), Carlos Dias (PT), Kerstin Elvin (SE), Nicole Fabien (FR), Ingmar Heijnen (CH), Manfred Herold (AT), Cees Kallenberg (NL), Marjatta Leirisalo-Repo (FI), Pier Luigi Meroni (IT), Evi Monogioudi (BE), Aresio Plaza (ES), Antonella Radice (IT), Stephan Regenass (CH), Joanna Sheldon (UK), Maria-José Sousa (PT), Barbara Trezzi (IT), Markku Viander (FI), Ingrid Zegers (BE)

**Thermo Fisher Scientific (or Distributor):** Eckart Mummert (DE), Nina Olschowka (DE)  
Amiram Amal (IL), Teresa Auraujo (PT), Felix Gastager (AT), Alexander Hill (UA), Gerben Zuiderveld (NL)

**Protocol:** Nina Olschowka

### Agenda

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| 1. National validation of autoantibody assays   | Jan                           |
| 2. ANA, CCP and RF questionnaires for Clinicians  | Manfred, Jan, Lucille, Nicole |
| 3. New EASI e-book: Content, how to proceed?<br>protocol book/ Information for labs / algorithms/ timelines   | all                           |
| 4. Questionnaire on APS   | Nancy                         |
| 5. Questionnaire on ANCA for labs   | Jan                           |
| 6. Questionnaire on ANCA for clinicians   | Jan-Willem                    |
| 7. Collaboration with The IFCC Working Group on Harmonization of<br>Autoantibody Testing and the Institute for Reference Materials and<br>Measurements (IRMM) | Nina                          |
| 8. Summary and Outlook; next EASI Forum meeting   | Yehuda, Nina                  |

#### 1. **National validation of autoantibody assays (Jan)**

Each certified labs has to validate a new test. However, sometimes a small lab has not enough samples to do so or at least it is a big effort. In the Netherlands, there is an initiative (of the College of Medical Immunologists, including EASI members) to help by organizing the validation studies in a way that bigger labs do the evaluations and the smaller labs can refer to these studies and don't have to do it on their own. Jan asks the EASI forum members if comparative initiatives are done in other countries so that the Netherlands can use their experience. No such initiative has been done so far. However, the EASI forum members are very interested in receiving feedback from the Netherlands and learning from the experience, so that it could be done accordingly in other countries.

#### 2. **ANA questionnaire, CCP and RF questionnaire for clinicians (Jan)**

The working group (Jan Damoiseaux, Manfred Herold, Nicole Fabien, Lucille Musset) has met very recently. They decided that ANA, anti-CCP and RF should be handled with one combined questionnaire.

Two basic questions:

1. Which clinical manifestation is considered appropriate for requesting this test?
2. How to interpret the test?

EASI Portugal did a questionnaire. This was translated to English.

The group needs a coordinator as nobody felt responsible to start the team work. Maria-José Sousa volunteers as coordinator of the group.

Nina will send an e-mail to Maria-José with the e-mail addresses of the project team.

### **3. *EASI e-book Content, how to proceed?***

Short discussion if e-book or not. We will plan it as e-book and, if possible, we will try to have it also in printed form but left this topic open. It should be a sort of a very simple manual for lab technicians; no list of available commercial kits but a list of the methods and pros and cons of the methods, sensitivity and specificity, the importance of pre-test probability and the methods which fit best for the different probabilities. Algorithms should be implemented if available. Not more than 3-4 references per chapter.

At the IWAA meeting in São Paulo in August 28 to 30, 2014, the editorial team should meet and discuss the content in detail (and time lines). Luis Andrade volunteered to do the editor in chief. Ed Chan, Jan Damoiseaux, Manfred Herold, Maria-José Sousa volunteered as co-editors. If not everybody of this team can be present in Brazil, a conference call should be done.

Nina will distribute the Spanish book to the editors' team. The team will discuss if it can be taken as basis and what has to be done additionally and what can be skipped (with credit for the Spanish authors).

### **4. *APS questionnaire for clinicians***

Unfortunately, Nancy Agmon-Levin could not attend this forum meeting. She is very sorry. However, the questionnaire is almost final and can be sent to the forum members soon.

### **5. *Questionnaire on ANCA for labs***

The questionnaire for labs was done in some countries, e.g. in Spain, Finland and the Netherlands. Several countries started or want to start soon such as Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland and Austria.

Nina will send the questionnaire to all EASI forum members and ask them to communicate to Jan Damoiseaux if they will or won't do the questionnaire in their country. If yes, which timeline. Aim is to have all results by the end of 2014.

### **6. *Questionnaire on ANCA for clinicians***

Jan-Willem Cohen-Tervaert and Cees Kallenberg built a Dutch team to discuss a questionnaire for clinicians. They decided to do a pilot project with the Netherlands. Major challenge will be to make it interesting for the clinician – they get so much infos and questionnaires – it will be thrown in the bin immediately. Therefore, the questionnaire will be built up as a training with questions after each chapter. The clinicians who participate will receive education points, accepted by the health insurance funds. Thus, the clinicians will profit from filling it out.

What is meant by "clinicians"? – The Dutch questionnaire shall address (1) young internal medicine practitioners or even trainees and (2) nephrologists and rheumatologist.

### **7. *Collaboration with the IFCC Working Group on Harmonization of Autoantibody Testing and the Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM)***

Joanna Sheldon from UK introduces the project of harmonization of autoantibody testing which is a project in collaboration with the IRMM in Brussels. Ingrid Zegers and Evi Monogioudi from the IRMM are also present to discuss a possible collaboration with EASI. For the IRMM and IFCC it is of major importance not

to prefer any commercial vendor of autoantibody tests. EASI is initiated and supported by Thermo Fisher Scientific. However, Yehuda Shoenfeld stresses the fact that Thermo Fisher Scientific is not influencing decisions nor wants to push the EASI teams in a special direction. They just give the platform for the meetings.

Evi Monogioudi shows her presentation about the project so far. The development of a standard material for MPO is most advanced, followed by PR3 and  $\beta$ 2GPI. Also for CCP, discussions are ongoing. PierLuigi Meroni who is also involved in the IFCC, supports the idea of a collaboration. The team agrees that it is willing to collaborate with the IFCC/IRMM and if e.g. sera are needed, the EASI members are willing to collect them. Ingrid Zegers and Jo Sheldon agreed to contact Nina Olschowka in the first step, as soon as there is a need of support by the EASI network.

#### **8. *Next EASI Forum meeting, next EASI conference***

The EASI session of the Nice AI conference was not really organized by EASI. For the next meeting in Leipzig, this should be planned much more beforehand. The team agrees on the next topic in Leipzig 2016: APS. Nina Olschowka will contact Karsten Conrad, the organizer of the Dresden Meeting on Autoantibodies 2015, and propose an EASI symposium on the topic "Celiac Disease".

The next EASI Forum meeting will be in Dresden for the 12<sup>th</sup> Dresden Symposium on Autoantibodies on May 27-30, 2015.

Yehuda Shoenfeld proposes to have a look in the topic "prediction in apparently healthy" for the future.