
Minutes

EASI Forum

Bologna, March 10, 2017; 12:30 – 14:00 h

Participants: Yehuda Shoenfeld (IL), Hristina Andreeva (NO), Nicola Bizzaro (IT), Jaime Calvo (ES), Ricard Cervera (ES), Karsten Conrad (DE), Carlos Dias (PT), Catharina Eriksson (SE), Marie-Agnes Dragon-Durey (FR), Katarzyna Fischer (PL), Anna-Maija Haapala (FI), Manfred Herold (AT), Jussi Kantele (FI), Werner Klotz (AT), Maarten Limper (NL); Marcos Lopez-Hoyos (ES), Pier-Luigi Meroni (IT), Lucile Musset (FR), Ulrich Sack (DE), Maria José Sousa (PT), Markku Viander (FI)

Thermo Fisher Scientific: Nina Olschowka (Global Marketing AI)
Anders Alarcon (SE), Jordi Betran (ES), Martin Brandenburg (DE), Paulo Dias (ES), Gaia Gallo (IT), Thomas Horn (AT), Emilie Le Floch (FR), Anne Omholt (NO), Sune Sved (FI), Gerben Zuiderveld (NL)

Protocol: Nina Olschowka

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Accreditation in autoimmune diagnostic laboratories. A position paper of EASI
3. Horizon 2020 – status and possible collaboration with EASI
4. APS questionnaire
5. ANA, CCP and RF questionnaires for Clinicians
6. Questionnaire on ANCA for labs
7. Questionnaire on ANCA for clinicians
8. New EASI website – status
9. Topic and possible speakers for EASI session at the Dresden Symposium on Autoantibodies (September 2017)
10. Other topics discussed at the meeting
11. next EASI Forum meeting

1. Welcome

Jan Damoiseaux, Jan-Willem Cohen-Tervaert, Xavier Bossuyt and Pier-Luigi Meroni apologized because they could not attend the meeting. However, all have informed Nina before the meeting about progress in different projects.

2. Accreditation in autoimmune diagnostic laboratories. A position paper of EASI

As agreed in our last meeting, Nicola, Xavier, Anna-Maija, Yehuda and Ulrich have written a paper to help autoimmune labs in the accreditation. The paper was published already and is attached to these minutes (with the kind permission of the editor in chief (Yehuda). A great thank you to all the authors which have made this in an unmet efficient collaboration. For the authors, however, the article should be only the start – more concrete tips and support should follow, e.g. the minimal requirements for evaluation of e.g. anti-phospholipid or ANA methods. Nicola Bizzaro and Ulrich Sack to follow-up.

3. Horizon 2020 – status and possible collaboration with EASI

Horizon 2020 is a collaboration of different standardization initiatives for new reference materials in Autoimmunity.

Pier-Luigi Meroni is one of the coordinators. EASI will support any activities coming from Horizon 2020. In the moment, however, there is no news to this topic.

4. APS Questionnaire

The EASI group has not started any initiatives in the topic of APS so far. However, a questionnaire was planned once and we would like to take up the idea again. Yehuda had contact to Vittorio Pengo, who is willing to collaborate with EASI in this issue. Ricard Cervera volunteers also and so does Pier-Luigi Meroni (clarified directly after the meeting). Yehuda will contact Vittorio Pengo and we hope that he takes the lead and comes back to the EASI forum group with a proposal from these three specialists.

5. Questionnaire on ANA/CCP/RF for Clinicians

Three countries (Austria, France and Portugal) have asked clinicians to fill in a questionnaire. However, the three questionnaires are not totally comparable and the questions are not perfect to be a basis for recommendations. The EASI workgroup (Maria José, Manfred, Lucile, Marie-Agnes, Ulrich and Jan, who could not attend the meeting) had met shortly before the forum meeting and has discussed the following points:

- We need a short and concise questionnaire for internet which can result in recommendations. We think that we need a better communication between lab and clinician.
- What is the aim of this questionnaire? What do we want to learn?
- Maria-José volunteers to do a summary of the three questionnaires (France, Austria, Portugal) in a Poster for the Dresden Congress
- Maria-José will do a proposal/draft of the questionnaire and send it around in drop box before March 20th. Everybody agrees to answer as fast as possible.

6. Questionnaire on ANCA for Labs

Jan Damoiseaux has prepared a publication. Since the questionnaire in the UK/Ireland has been taken care of by UK-NEQAS, they also were asked to give comments and actually they had quite some comments. The comments have been implemented now. The article will be submitted soon for the planned special issue on harmonization of the Clin Chem Lab Med, which Jan has already discussed with Xavier Bossuyt, who is the editor in chief.

7. Questionnaire on ANCA for Clinicians

Jan-Willem Cohen-Tervaert has finalized the questionnaire but would like to wait with distributing it for the publication of the new consensus recommendations on ANCA testing. The forum group agrees that we should wait. However, the forum group decides that it makes sense to do the questionnaire as e-questionnaire in internet from the beginning on an international level (and not doing a pilot project in the Netherlands first).

8. New EASI website – status

Finally, we will have a legal contract partner (a non-profit legal entity) with which Thermo Fisher Scientific can make a contract about supporting them to build up a website. Kenes will organize the communication. Nina has sent a draft for a contract and will follow up. We hope that things now will go on smoothly and that we have good news at our next meeting in Dresden.

9. Topic and possible speakers for EASI session at the Dresden Symposium on Autoantibodies (September 2017)

Manfred proposed that we focus the presentations on EASI itself, as it is still a widely unknown initiative. We will present the idea of EASI and how it can contribute to increase the quality of autoimmune diagnostics. Furthermore, a lot of different topics were proposed such as anti-drug antibodies, myositis antibodies or the latest paper on accreditation (see #2 of this protocol). In several discussions directly after the EASI forum meeting, some forum members had concerns that such a mixture of very different topics might give the impression of not really having a red line in EASI. It might be a much stronger

message when we concentrate totally on EASI this time which could, for example, be done with the following presentations:

- a. Who is EASI and what are the goals
- b. Major Achievements: ANA questionnaire and recommendations
- c. Major Achievements: ANCA
- d. Current Topics in the EASI groups: Helping labs in the accreditation
- e. Current Topics: Standardization, Harmonization and the collaboration with the “Horizon 2020” initiative

The topic myositis antibodies was proposed for the EASI symposium in Lisbon in 2018. It would be great if local EASI groups would look into this topic and if EASI members, therefore, could contribute with talks to that EASI session at the 11th International Congress on Autoimmunity.

Please feel free to discuss this approach and come back to Nina if you have other proposals or concerns about the agenda.

10. Other topics discussed at the meeting

- a. Jan Damoiseaux had informed Nina that the Dutch EASI group sends a follow-up ANA/ENA questionnaire for Dutch labs to find out if the 15 Dutch recommendations, published in 2009, are implemented or not. The forum group discusses, that this would be very interesting, also for the international questionnaire/recommendations. However, we should wait another 2 or 3 years before doing so, as the recommendations have been published less than 5 years ago.
- b. On June 30th to July 2nd, there will be an autoimmunity conference in St. Petersburg. The newly built Russian EASI group will meet at this conference. Yehuda Shoenfeld is one of the initiators of this conference and hopes for many visitors from Western Europe.
- c. A special issue on harmonization of Clin Chem Lab Med is planned. Deadline for papers is September 2017. Xavier as the editor in chief has asked for a paper on EASI. Jan and Nina will write a draft. To support this, all local EASI groups are asked for sending in their local list of achievements!
- d. The new IFCC reference materials for MPO and PR3 antibodies have been tested in a substudy of the ANCA multicenter study. Depending on the outcome, it might be not of added value to do repeated measurements in multiple labs. Xavier Bossuyt and Jan Damoiseaux will discuss this. If they see an added value, they will inform Nina. She will contact Joe Sheldon and Ingrid Zegers to discuss with them the possibilities to make the reference material known in the community with the help of EASI. However, a clear protocol is needed before the material is sent to the EASI labs.

11. Next EASI Forum Meetings

- a. The next EASI Forum meeting will take place at the Dresden Symposium on Autoantibodies in September 27th – 30th 2017.
- b. For 2018, the EASI forum meeting will take place at the 11th International Congress on Autoimmunity in Lisbon, May 16th to 20th 2018.