EUROPEAN FEDERATION

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021 - ISSUE 96

For Immunogenetics

.....FROM THE EFI PRESIDENT

DEAR EFI MEMBERS



It seems so recent that I wrote my first newsletter as EFI President. I think that since the pandemic, my sense of time has gone completely awry.

As I write this report, the COP 26 summit on climate change is taking place in Glasgow. It is the biggest ever conference to take place within the UK, coincidentally taking place at the venue where we should have hosted our EFI conference. There have been positive and negative reviews of this event in the media and my own view is that anything that highlights the issues of global warming and makes a wider number of the population aware of the role they can play in reducing the risks is positive. As EFI has minimised travelling for business and educational meetings due to the pandemic, we have inadvertently made a contribution to the reduction of CO2 emissions due to air

and other travel. Even when we do initiate our face to face business meetings, we must consider their necessity and use them to focus on the benefits of face to face interactions i.e. collaborative discussions and forward planning and make use of the virtual platforms for the business that does not warrant the same level of interactive discussion e.g. updating documents. So we will move forward with a combination of online and face to face meetings making sure we make best use of our travelling.

We all know that laboratory testing generates a huge amount of waste – just think of the pipette tips that are discarded alone. It does despair me when I look at my efforts for household recycling and then witness the waste that is generated in the laboratory. I would be really interested to hear from any members that have introduced schemes to reduce their laboratory waste and wish to share this with others. We can all learn from each other. In my own laboratory, we have moved from being paper rich – worksheets, SOPs, reports etc., to having almost everything held electronically, so maybe a couple of trees have benefited.

Congratulations to Dave Turner, Tony Slavcev and Sandra van Hensbergen for the successful organisation of the first virtual Summerschool. The presentations and participation from the faculty were well received by the attendees. Despite the time differences, and virtual participation, there were good interactions in the open sessions. The virtual platform used was supported by Guarant, EFI's appointed professional congress organiser and this worked very well. Congratulations to Victoria Wood for receiving the best poster prize for her presentation entitled "Use of chaotropic disruption to determine HLA-antibody avidity - a potential enabler to HLA incompatible transplantation?". Details on the next Summerschool have not been finalised but we hope to have details soon.

Since my last report, I have participated in several teleconferences with the EFI Officers and the Executive Committee. These teleconferences were initiated by Joannis Mytilineos during his presidency and at one hour every two months, they really do help to keep all the Executive Committee members informed of what is going on and help us complete our actions in a timely manner - I hope the other Executive Committee members agree with me regarding this! It also helps us focus on the 'bigger' issues when we have our full committee meeting which takes place in the autumn and prior to the annual EFI conference.

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....FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Here we find ourselves yet again in a new wave of Corona. Whereas we have had a relatively unaffected summer, the inevitable new wave of the virus has struck us. Booster vaccination programmes are running, but as the Omicron variant teaches us, worldwide vaccination is the only real solution.

How will this affect our society? As for now, we expect the 35th Annual EFI Conference in Amsterdam to go ahead as a physical meeting on May 17-20, with the option to follow the most important content online as well. Registration and abstract submission have opened, and the most important dates can be found in this Newsletter. The week preceding the EFI Conference, the concluding meeting of the 18th International HLA & Immunogenetics Workshop will be held in the Netherlands as well. This meeting will be in Noorwijkerhout, and the registration for this event has opened also. As co-organiser of both meetings I encourage you to subscribe to both events for discussing great science, but also to catch up with friends we have only seen online for the last years.

This newsletter contains the report of the virtual autumn meeting of the Executive Committee, some reports of our committees, as well as a report from the first ever virtual International Summerschool. As you can read, this event was very well received and the organisers can be applauded for their efforts.

As always, I hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter. I wish you a merry Christmas with friends and family (local restrictions permitting), and a great start of 2022. Till we meet again!

Sebastiaan Heidt

Deadline for contributions to EFI Newsletter 97 is March 14, 2022. Please send your contributions by e-mail to s.heidt@lumc.nl



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.....FROM THE EFI PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

Our Secretary, Mats Bengtsson reports on the Executive Committee autumn meetings in this newsletter. The meeting we have with the chairs of the EFI committees is a very important meeting as we all are updated on each committee's activities. A common thread from several committees is how we make the many recorded lectures that we now have, from the Scientific Committee's webinars, the Education Committee's Summerschool and other training programmes, available to a wider audience. So we are investigating how best to do this and I hope we will have our own "EFIflix" available in 2022.

I am so very pleased to see that we have received applications for the various Executive Committee vacancies that will arise at our next General Assembly, particularly to have multiple applicants for the Councillor vacancies. It is fantastic that we have volunteers that wish to join and participate in the activities of the Executive Committee. All the candidates are excellent, so the voting, for the Councillors, will be challenging. I wish we could have all of the candidates on the committee as we certainly have sufficient work to keep everyone active. During the autumn Executive Committee meeting our Treasurer, Gwendaline Guidicelli, presented an update the current EFI finances. The cost of postponing the Glasgow Conference in 2020 due to the pandemic, was covered by the profit made during the virtual EFI Conference in 2021. However this has left EFI with significantly reduced income for these two years. Sadly our income from membership fees has also declined. This may be due to members not renewing their membership as they would normally do during the EFI conference. We need to investigate further. The reduction in income means that we have to rigorously evaluate our expenditure whilst maintaining the support for our key activities and as such, more time than usual is being spent on reviewing our financial situation.

My thanks to all the committee members and the chairs for their ongoing commitment to the goals of EFI and for their participation during the autumn meetings.

At the time of writing we have six months to go until our next EFI conference which will take place in the wonderful city of Amsterdam. The theme of the conference is 'Tolerance, Acceptance and Permissiveness'. Eric Spierings and Sebastiaan Heidt, together with the EFI Education and Scientific Committees have put together an excellent programme. In addition to the scientific content of the conference, we are all looking forward to long awaited EFI social activities. This will also be our first opportunity, since Lisbon 2019, to interact personally with all of the corporate sponsors and other exhibitors. We are looking forward to seeing you all. So good luck to all involved in the organisation. I know how it feels to be building up to the final stages of organising a conference, enjoy the experience, it will be fabulous.

This newsletter will probably arrive with you when we have entered into the new year of 2022. I hope that everyone has/ had a wonderful festive season, and that for those people who make resolutions good luck. All the very best to 'you and yours' for the forthcoming year.

I am, so very much, looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Amsterdam.

Ann-Margaret

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Since the last issue of the EFI Newsletter we received a lot of applications forms from new members. Hereby we would like to welcome the following new EFI members:

- A. Brandsma, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- E. Peereboom, Zeist, the Netherlands
- I. Gille, Delft, the Netherlands
- O.J. Valdez, L'Aquila, Italy
- M. Tarabene, Splitsko-Dalmatinska, Croatia
- D. Kallon, Guildford, United Kingdom
- R. Crocchiolo, Milano, Italy
- C. Neuchel, Ulm, Germany
- H.Y. Low, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- R. Lammerts, Groningen, the Netherlands
- N. Khranovska, Kyiv, Ukraine



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REPORT OF THE EFI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUTUMN MEETING 2021

Again, this year it was decided to not have a face-to-face meeting but a virtual meeting of the EFI Executive Committee (EC) and the same for all other EFI Committees. Traditionally all EFI committees meet in Leiden in October. This is an excellent opportunity to share information between members of the different committees. For members of the EC there are two meetings. First is the Executive Committee meeting with Coordinators (ECC) which is a meeting between all the Chairs of the different committees and the EC. Here, common strategies are discussed and plans for the future are made. The EC then meet the day after and then make decisions on requests received during the ECC meeting.

On October 26 the ECC meeting took place and as always it is impressive to learn about all the activities reported from the different committees, also reported elsewhere in this newsletter. The new chairs Helle Bruunsgaard (EPT), Blanka Vidan-Jeras (Accreditation) and Luca Vago (Scientific) were welcomed by our President. The EC then had two half day meetings on October 28-29. The following is a summary of some of the topics discussed.

Diversity and inclusivity policy

Currently EFI is lacking a diversity and inclusion policy. In today's world it is important to be committed to a culture within our society that fosters and preserves diversity, equity and inclusion. The employees of EFI, Sandra and Sonja are employed via Leiden University Medical Center that already has this policy but work will be done to have this for all EFI activities.

GDPR

At the moment, an inventory is being prepared about what information is stored in the different committees and when all data is available the next steps will be decided upon. Especially at the accreditation office a huge amount of data is stored.

EFI conferences

With two years without a "real" EFI conferences we are all looking forward to meet again in Amsterdam. Although the virtual meeting earlier this year was very successful with more than a thousand participants, meeting all our EFI friends and colleagues is something we really look forward to. The 35th EFI conference will be in Amsterdam between May 17-20, 2022 and just before the conference the International Workshop will be held. The motto of the conference is 'Tolerance, acceptance and permissibility'. The conference will be a hybrid meeting with both delegates in Amsterdam and attendees connecting virtually. unfortunately such hybrid organization is more expensive to organise than a regular meeting. The Conference website is open and one can see that it has the same look as the EFI website. The conference will also be the first to use the new EasyChair abstract tool. The early registration deadline is February 2022. Eric Spiering who presented the update, also promised a magical closing lecture which you don't want to miss!

EFI budget

The budget suffers from the pandemic through one year without any benefits from the annual conference and also less income from this year's meeting than a usual live meeting. The good news was that at the GA it was reported that there could be a negative result from this meeting but at the end, there was a positive result mainly because of more than a 1000 participants and the support from our sponsors. The income from membership fees is less than previous years, and we need to understand this better. We have reduced our expenses with no face-to-face meetings during the year and also no expenses for bursaries. The expenses for the maintenance of both the EFI website and the Accreditation website is substantial. There have been negotiations with the LUMC to reduce the cost for their service, but still, we need all those tools. In times like this we are lucky that we still have reserves that can be used for the budget. A safe cloud storage has also been created for all the documentation.

EFI elections

There are vacancies for three positions as Councilors, Secretary and Deputy Secretary and Treasurer. While nominations have been received for all positions, for Treasurer, Secretary and Deputy Treasurer only one nomination was received so for those positions no elections is needed. For the three positions as Councilors, we have six candidates so there will be an election next year. All candidates are presented in this issue of the newsletter.

International Summer School (ISS)

After last year's cancellation we now hosted a virtual ISS that was held between September 6-8. The faculty was from EFI, ASHI, APHIA and also ARSHI and there were 34 participants from all over the world. The platform that our PCO Guarant provided worked very well. Despite huge time differences the summer school was very successful, as can be read in the report in this Newsletter.

Constitution

The Court in Strasbourg have been accepted so our new constitution is now effective. Our website has been updated accordingly. The EC will continue to look at other parts that might need to be updated. At present, the liability of the Councilors and Officers are not very well defined.

Teaching and education resources on the web

We are currently looking into how to host full presentations from the teaching sessions at the annual meetings but also from the summer school and EFI scientific webinars

And as usual, the EFI medal and Ceppellini award were discussed.

Mats Bengtsson, EFI secretary

NOMINATIONS FOR THE EFI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, VACANCIES AND ELECTION PROCESS

Nominations for the EFI Executive Committee, vacancies and election process

Next year we will have elections for the EFI Executive committee. We sought nominations for the positions of Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer and three positions as Councillors.

The present Deputy Secretary, Dave Roelen was nominated for Secretary and for the position of Deputy Secretary, Kay Poulton was nominated. No other nominations were received. For the position of Treasurer, we also received one nomination. Jean Villard. That means for these three positions there will not require an election, but the nominations are subject to approval by the EFI General Assembly at the 35th European and Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. For the three positions of Councillors, we received six nominations so for those positions we will have an election next year. All candidates are presented below and will also be available electronically during the voting process.

Nomination for Secretary -Dave Roelen



I studied Biomedical Sciences in Leiden, the Netherlands, and did my PhD studies on alloreactive T cells under the supervision of Frans Claas and Jon van Rood. After my graduation in 1994, I spent almost 2 ½ years in Oxford to work on transplant tolerance induction with Kathryn Wood and Sir Peter Morris. From 1997 onwards I continued my research on transplant tolerance and alloreactivity at the Leiden University Medical Center. In 2008, I became a Medical Immunologist and director of the HLA laboratory in Leiden. As an on-call immunologist I am dealing with transplant related matters and the Eurotransplant Acceptable Mismatch program for almost 25 years. I used to be the treasurer of the Dutch Transplantation Society and I currently am the treasurer of the Dutch College of Medical Immunologists and the chairman of the Dutch HLA Working group. Since 2010 I am an inspector for the Dutch Accreditation Council (medical laboratories, ISO 15189) and EFI inspector.

Besides my interest in HLA and Immunogenetics with a main focus on antibody mediated clinical implications (e.g. options for highly immunized patients), I like to spend time with my wife and 2 children (of 20 and 22 years old) and like to play golf and loves to run. I have served as a Councillor for 1 year and became the Deputy Secretary in 2016 and I am looking forward to step up as a Secretary in order to be able to use his experience in the field for the EFI community.

Nomination for Deputy Secretary -Kay Poulton

I am currently serving my second term as a Councillor on the EFI Executive Committee and am very happy to be part of this vibrant team. I first joined EFI in 1999 when I started my job in the Manchester Transplantation Laboratory. My early days in EFI were spent as a member of the Standards Committee, which I chaired between 2008 and



2014. Shortly after that, I met some of you in your own laboratories when I became an EFI inspector, and saw how the best H&I laboratories are organised. I hope that I have learned from you all, and thank you for your hospitality and support. More recently, I became a UK EFI Commissioner and am looking forward to working more closely with those on the Accreditation Committee. My background means that I am familiar with the way that the different parts of EFI fit together and I'm proud to be part of this society which brings H&I together, worldwide. I'd very much like to take on this role of Deputy Secretary so that I can increase my contribution to the Executive Committee and to EFI as a society.

Nomination for Treasurer -Jean Villard



I am MD since 1988, after a complete clinical training in internal medicine I moved to research to obtain an MD-PhD. Then I went back to the clinic to specialize in Immunology and Allergology. I am currently professor of clinical and transplant immunology at the Geneva University Hospital (HUG), co-director the National Reference Laboratory for Histocompatibility (LNRH). I am also the head of the transplantation and cellular therapy facilities at HUG. In addition to my activity as medical director of the HLA laboratory and my clinical activity, I am involved as PI in several research projects in the field of transplant immunology and immunogenetics. I have also undertaken at the national level the reform of the Swiss system of allocation of renal transplants as president of the medical committee of the foundation Swisstransplant. I organised the EFI

conference in Geneva in 2015 and was a member for the board as Councillor from 2018 to 2020. I'm highly motivated to pursue my commitment to EFI and the position of treasurer is a good opportunity. I have some experience in the field being currently the treasurer of the Swiss society of transplantation. With the current deputy treasurer, we can make a great team in the EFI board.

Nomination for Councillor -Peter Horn



Currently, I am heading the Institute of Transfusion Medicine at the University Hospital Essen, Germany, and act as Director of the HLA laboratory. I started my training as a physician in Hematology/Oncology at the University Hospital Cologne before completing a 2¹/₂ year postdoctoral fellowship at the Transplantation Biology Division at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Seattle, USA (Prof. Rainer Storb). I gained further experience in the field of histocompatibility and immunogenetics at institutes in Düsseldorf and Hannover, before I accepted the chair for Transfusion Medicine in Essen in 2008 where I continue to be actively involved in research, teaching, and clinical application of immunogenetics in both stem cell and solid organ transplantation. I have completed a number of inspections as an EFI inspector (and later DAkkS/ EFI inspector) and I have been an active member of EFI's Educational Committee from 2011 to 2018 and served in EFI's Executive Committee from 2013 to 2016.

During my career I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to cooperate with colleagues from Europe and many other parts of the world. I feel that the experiences I have gained both personally and professionally could be useful to contribute to the aims of our society.

Nomination for Councillor -Moshe Israeli

I serve as the director of the tissue typing laboratory of the Beilinson Hospital, Rabin Medical Center in Israel (EFI-accredited since 2000). In my clinical duty I am responsible for H&I diagnostic testing for all organ and stem cell transplants carried out by the Clalit Health Services organization in Israel. I received my PhD in transplant immunology from the Bar-Ilan University in Israel and was fortunate to complete a post-doctoral fellowship in the Leiden University Medical Center, the Netherlands under the supervision of Prof. Frans Claas. I have been an active member of several international committees in the field of transplantation and H&I such as the ASHI EPT committee, ASHI International affairs committee. World Marrow Donors Association Quality Assurance working group and others. I am proud and happy to volunteer for the standards and QA committee of the European Federation for Immunogenetics.



I was also an active member in several EFI-region-8 educational workshops. I have co-authored nearly 30 peerreviewed publications in the field of transplant immunology and H&I, and have also received several awards such as the Marilyn McQueen Award for an outstanding young scientist on behalf of the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics. I propose my candidacy for the duty of EFI Councillor as part my obligation to take an active part in the international activities of the H&I field. This has always been a field of international collaboration and scientific education. Over the years I enjoyed the collaborative spirit of the greatest experts in our clinical field which has no borders and no geographical limits. I owe a great debt to my teachers in the International H&I summer school of 2006 (among them were Prof. Eric Thorsby and Prof. Frans Claas) who showed me that international collaboration and education activities are so important. In my view, now the time has arrived when I can also take an active role in contributing to the EFI community by taking a position of an EFI councillor, representing EFI-region-8.

Nomination for Councillor -Neema Mayor



I am Head of Immunogenetics Research at Anthony Nolan and Honorary Lecturer in the Cancer Institute, University College London (UCL). I obtained my PhD from UCL studying the impact of NOD2 polymorphisms on unrelated donor Haematopoietic Cell Transplant (HCT) outcomes. My research is focussed on the development of novel methods to detect genetic polymorphism and improvement in unrelated donor selection by the inclusion of additional clinical and genetic factors. I also work with colleagues across the UK on projects to improve HCT patient outcome data reporting to help facilitate research studies. I am also an Associate Editor for Human Immunology and a member of the Editorial Board of HLA and the International Journal of Immunogenetics. I completed my first term as a Councillor on the EFI Executive Committee in July 2020 where I worked alongside colleagues on projects such as the delivery of the new EFI website, increasing collaboration with parallel professional



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organisations, and increasing EFI's presence on social media. As a Councillor I am keen to support EFI and its members in the development of the next generation of H&I scientists by promoting its educational program and supporting members to take part in conference attendance and networking opportunities.

Nomination for Councillor -Antonij Slavcev

I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. After finishing my medical studies and defending my PhD thesis in immunology in Prague, I spent 18 months as a postdoc at the Department of Transplantation Immunology, CLB (now Sanguin) in Amsterdam. Since 2001, I am head of the Department of Immunogenetics at the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine (IKEM), supporting an intensive organ transplantation program and the Czech Stem Cell Donor Registry (in Prague). In 2012 I became assistant professor in medical immunology. Besides teaching immunology and immunogenetics, in the recent years I was involved in the organisation of various educational workshops for HLA laboratories in the Czech Republic and Central Europe. In collaboration with colleagues from Austria and other countries, we organised the 25th EFI Conference in 2011 and fourteen East-West Immunogenetics Conferences (2006 - 2020).



I was member of the organising committee of the 15th International Summer School on Immunogenetics (2021) held recently on line. Currently I am member of the Education committee of EFI. I hope to be helpful in coordinating educational activities in EFI, making a liaison between the EFI Board and the organising committees of regional conferences.

Nomination for Councillor -David Turner



I first started working in H&I in 1992 in Manchester, UK, and following 10 years working in labs in London I have been the Director of a routine H&I lab in Edinburgh since 2008, supporting solid organ transplant and transfusion. I have served on a number of Committees in the UK and in EFI and since 2016 I have been the Chair of the EFI Education Committee, but am due to stand down in Spring 2022. I have also recently become the Chair of the European Board for Transplant Immunology within the UEMS, a body created to help oversee the ESHI Diploma examinations which many EFI members have now undertaken. I hope that within my time working with colleagues in EFI I have demonstrated a commitment to initiating and completing projects for the benefit of the EFI membership. I would like an opportunity to work on the EFI Executive Committee as a Councillor as I feel I can bring the experience I have gained in working on the Education Committee to help in decision making and identifying the priorities for EFI over the next few years.

Nomination for Councillor -Luca Vago

I am Group Leader of the Unit of Immunogenetics, Leukemia Genomics and Immunobiology at the San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milano, and part of the clinical staff of the Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplantation Unit in the same institution. I am a physician scientist, combining direction of a translational research group with clinical activity. I qualified in medicine and achieved my PhD in Milano, and spent part of my training in immunology at Stanford University, under the supervision of Prof. Peter Parham. My research is focused on elucidating the interplay between immune system and leukemia, especially in the model system of allogeneic HCT. In particular, my group focuses on understanding mechanism by which post-transplantation relapses occur, combining cutting-edge immunogenomic analysis of patient samples with the development of innovative humanized animal models. Our long-term aim is to develop personalized therapeutic approaches able to rewire a proficient graft-versus-tumor effect. I am a longstanding member of EFI, where I currently sit as Chair of the Scientific Committee, and I lead the immune reconstitution subcommittee in the EBMT CTIBWP.



I've been coordinating a number of national and international collaborative studies on immunogenetics and on leukemia immunobiology, including the HLALOSS and HLACOVID-ITALIA initiatives. If elected in the EFI Executive Committee, I could further strengthen the dialogue with the immunogenetic scientific community, with a specific interest in promoting decision-making on how to facilitate young researchers and the integration of new expertise and technologies in histocompatibility research.

The elections will be electronic and all active members (i.e., have paid their membership fee for 2021) will receive notification by e-mail regarding the election procedure.

To be able to participate you must have registered your e-mail address in the membership section. If you for some reasons cannot participate in the electronic election but would like to vote on paper, please contact Sandra van Hensbergen at the EFI central office.



The 18th International HLA & Immunogenetics Workshop

The Netherlands, May 11-15, 2022

Preliminary program

Day	Time	Program
Wednesday, May 11, 2022	13:00 - 18:00	Registration
	18:30 - 22:00	Opening and welcome reception
Thursday, May 12, 2022	8:30 - 12:00	Workshop Sessions
(deserved)	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
and the state of the second	13:00 - 17:00	Workshop Sessions
The second second second second	17:30 - 19:00	Dinner
and the second second	19:00 - 22:00	Wine Tasting
Friday, May 13, 2022	7:00 - 8:30	Councillors' Breakfast Meeting (on invitation)
	8:30 - 12:00	Workshop Sessions
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
	13:00 - 18:00	Workshop Sessions
	19:00 - 24:00	Networking Event
Saturday, May 14, 2022	8:30 - 12:00	Workshop Sessions
The second second	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
Contraction of the second second	13:00 - 17:00	Workshop Sessions
and and the	17:30 - 19:00	Dinner
	18:00 - 22:00	Councillors' Dinner (on invitation)
Sunday, May 15, 2022	8:30 - 12:00	Plenary session
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
	13:00 - 17:00	Plenary session / Closing
	18:00	Departure Amsterdam
Monday, May 16, 2022	11:00	Departure Amsterdam

Registration now open!

https://www.ihiw18.org/ihiws-2018-registration/

BURSARY DEADLINES 2022.

It is our pleasure inform you about the upcoming deadlines for application for the EFI Personal Bursary, the EFI Education and Scientific Bursary and the support for EFI 'International Affairs'. The bursary deadlines for 2022 are set as per below: Next to the above, please note an Annual Conference Bursary is made available to attend the 35th European Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility Conference and more information is to be found elsewhere in this Newsletter. Reminders of upcoming Bursary deadlines and information about the application procedure will provided to you by the EFI Office by email. More information on the respective Bursaries is to be found in the Bursaries page on our website www.efi-web.org.

	Deadline 1	Deadline 2	Deadline 3	Deadline 4
EFI Personal Bursary	1 February 2022	1 May 2022	1 August 2022	1 November 2022
EFI Education and Scientific Bursary	1 February 2022	1 May 2022	1 August 2022	1 November 2022
Support for EFI 'International Affairs'	1 February 2022	1 May 2022	1 August 2022	1 November 2022

EFI ANNUAL CONFERENCE BURSARIES

It is our pleasure to announce the application procedure for EFI Personal Bursaries to join the annual EFI Conference to be held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands to be held 17-20 May 2022 is now open.

In addition to the deadlines given for personal bursary applications, a deadline of February 4th 2022 has been set for applications for bursaries specifically to support attendance at the annual EFI conference in Amsterdam. Preference for these applications will be given to members who have been selected to present an abstract at the EFI conference (either oral or poster presentation). Only one bursary per laboratory will be awarded. All bursaries are awarded on the strict condition that the recipient submits a report of ~ 1 page on any scientific session of the conference, which will be published in the EFI newsletter, following the conference.

Application procedure

EFI members are invited to apply for the Personal Bursary via their personal Dashboard on the EFI website. When successfully logged in, please navigate to EFI Personal Bursary on your personal Dashboard and choose Apply. The application form will now appear partially completed with your personal details. In order to complete your bursary application, please check and complete the information requested. Next to this, you are requested to upload the following documents:

- Current Curriculum Vitae
- Submitted abstract
- Support letter form applicant's Laboratory Director
- Motivation letter to attend the meeting

Please click the submit button to send your application form to the EFI Office. The deadline for submission of the Personal Bursary application is 4th February 2022. We strive to inform successful Personal Bursary applicants prior to the deadline for early registration.



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Margot D., Stem cell transplant recipient

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UPDATE FROM THE EFI EDUCATION COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2021

European Specialisation in H&I (ESHI) Diploma

Online examinations for the ESHI Diploma were undertaken for 3 candidates in November 2021. Thanks to the EBTI members who checked candidates' suitability for examination and to the examiners themselves. Since the diploma started in 2014, 29 candidates have undertaken the oral examination with a pass rate of ~80%. Applications for examinations can be made via the Section of Surgery Transplant Immunology page of the UEMS website https://uemssurg.org/divisions/ (at: transplant-immunology/). The next examinations will be in Spring 2022. See the website for details of closing dates for the next round of exams.

e-Learning

The ten 30 minute presentations on different aspects of H&I in solid organ transplantation, HSCT, disease association and transfusion are still available to EFI members via the website. Log on to the EFI website and navigate to the e-learning section, then follow

the instructions to register and create an account to access the talks. Links to other learning resources are also on the same page of the website. A reminder that plenary sessions, teaching sessions and other talks from the EFI/BSHI 2021 conference are also still available to registrants until Friday 22nd April 2022. Registrants will have received an email detailing how this resource can be accessed. Discussions are also ongoing within EFI about how to host other e-learning resource content (e.g. EFI Conference Teaching Sessions and Summer School talks) via the website. We hope to have more on this in the near future.

EFI Continued Medical Education (CME) / Continued Professional Development (CPD)

As previously mentioned, it has been agreed that the Education Committee and EFI Office will work with a company called CPDme to develop and provide a system for EFI members to record CME/CPD activities. This will be for all members to use if they do not have a workable alternative that they already use. It is hoped that this will be made live for members in 2022. Currently a group made up of members of the Education, Accreditation and Executive Committees has been convened to take forward with CPDme how EFI wish the platform to look to provide the best system for our members.

European Technical H&I Qualification (ETHIQ)

The pilot scheme of the ETHIQ logbook is still being undertaken by a number of participants in 3 countries. The scheme is for technical staff working at the bench in EFI accredited laboratories, with supervision given by senior staff in their own lab. The aim is to create a qualification that gives a measure of technician's knowledge and technical competence in H&I. To grow the scheme, EFI has agreed to develop the ETHIQ qualification as an online resource using Moodle to enable more members to access the programme. It is hoped that this new Moodle based ETHIQ diploma will be available for registration in 2022.

REPORT OF THE EFI ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The Accreditation Committee met virtually on October 15, 2021. Our main business was to review the deficiencies found during inspections of the laboratories in the last semester and share experiences obtained when organizing virtual and hybrid inspections. Commissioners presented in depth some problematic and unusual cases which we discussed. On basis of their evaluation, some paths for future process improvements could be identified with the main intention to retain common criteria and practice for all accredited laboratories across all EFI regions. New Inspectors' Training Workshop has been planned in details for January 22^{nd} 2022.

Blanka Vidan Jeras

Chair EFI Accreditation Committee

REPORT ON THE 2021 VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL SUMMER

This year the International Summer School on Immunogenetics was hosted by EFI. Although the participants were looking forward to visiting the beautiful city of Prague, which was the original venue for the event, due to the pandemic it was held on a virtual platform. This was the first time that the summer school was held in a virtual format. The entire education feast was spread over 3 days from the 6th to the 8th of September 2021. It comprised of pre-recorded lecture sessions which could be watched at a time convenient to the delegates, following by interactive sessions. The lectures were divided into 5 sessions: HLA in health and disease, Solid Organ Transplantation, HSCT, HLA and other genetic systems in transfusion, and Future of H&I. Each of these sessions comprised of 3 faculty talks. There was also provision for networking online in a virtual meet setup.

The faculty chosen to deliver talks was

exceptional and had years of knowledge in their field of specialization. These included William Hildebrand, Tony Slavcev, Gehad ElGhazali, Medhat Askar, David Turner, Rhonda Holdsworth, Ann Margaret Little, Ashraf Dada, Jonathan Downing, and Lotte Wieten. The curriculum was well rounded, and focused on the basics as well as advanced molecular techniques in the field of Immunogenetics. The summer school began with a virtual welcome session, followed by the educational sessions. William Hildebrand started the first session in the HLA in Health and disease section, with his talk on What does HLA do? Latest theories of antigen presentation. This was followed by a talk on Transplant Immunology by Tony Slavcev. Gehad ElGhazali ended the first session with a talk on HLA disease association and drug hypersensitivity. The second session focussed on the nuances of solid organ transplantation, with Medhat Askar giving us an update about the procedures of Kidney Allocation in US. This was followed by David Turner's talk on Cross matching and virtual cross match strategies in UK. The final talk of this session was given by Rhonda Holdsworth on molecular matching. Session three comprised of three talks from the field of HSCT. Medhat Askar started this session by enlightening us with his talk on outcomes of HSCT using different stem cell sources. Rhonda Holdsworth then spoke about the future of registries and cord banks, and Ann Margaret Little ended this session with her interesting talk on the different factors that need to be considered during donor selection for HSCT. The fourth session was dedicated to HLA and other genetic systems in Transfusion, wherein, Ashraf Dada delivered a talk on the causes and management of Platelet Refractoriness, followed by Jonathan Downing's talk on FNAIT and PTP and the procedures that they use in their lab for these tests. The session ended with David Turner talking on prevention and investigations pertaining to TRALI. The fifth and final session delved into the future of H&I, with the first lecture by Ashraf Dada on NGS & Beyond. William Hildebrand spoke next on HLA and Cellular therapies, and finally the last session of the workshop was by Lotte Wieten where she spoke on Non classical HLA gene products.

The interactive sessions mainly involved question and answer rounds. The organizers also made a provision for attendees to send in questions through emails prior to the interactive sessions. One interactive session that really interested me was the one held by Ann Margaret Little, wherein she had sent the attendees a few case studies on donor selection that we had to answer before the live session. During the session she explained the different criteria such as HLA matching, HLA DPB1 permissive/ nonpermissive match used for each of the case studies, based on whether they were matched related or unrelated donor transplants. This is something that acts as a reference and directly helps centres like ours which are routinely involved in screening donors for patients undergoing hematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

Other than this there were a total of 31 abstracts submitted from a variety of topics such as Flow cytometry cross match, various aspects of haploidentical hematopoietic stem cell transplant, population genetics studies such as detection of new HLA alleles by Next generation sequencing, frequency of KIR receptor genes, HLA*B27 association with AS among others. Out of these the attendees with the top 10 abstracts were given an opportunity to present their data as a pre-recorded oral presentation, whereas the remaining 21 were selected as posters.

Overall, these sessions covered all the relevant topics from basics of HLA to its role in transplantation, transfusion, and disease association. Even though this was the first time that the organizers conducted the summer school in a virtual format, they took all efforts to create an exceptional scientific program that could match the in-person experience. I would like to thank EFI, the organizing committee and the faculty for giving us such a great experience.

Selma D'Silva Transplant Immunology & Immunogenetics Lab Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, India

CHEESE AND WINE VIRTUALLY

By Claudia Lehmann and Ramona Landgraf, Transplantation Immunology, Institute for Transfusion Medicine, Leipzig University Hospital, Germany

On 15-16 September the German Society for Immunogenetics (DGI) held her Annual Meeting virtually. The meeting was organized by the Transplantation Immunology laboratory in Leipzig. Claudia Lehmann and Ramona Landgraf were the presidents of the meeting. The theme of the meeting was: "from immune recognition to artificial intelligence" and was created already two years ago. Unfortunately, last year no meeting could take place due to the pandemic. More than 220 participants were registered and followed more than 20 hrs. of presentations. In short: Four plenary sessions, two oral and two poster sessions, one teaching and one technical assistance (MTA) workshop, plus two sponsored sessions were presented. On top, the traditional cheese and wine poster session was organized by sending to every registered participant beforehand the goodies. The meeting was a success in every way. Our PCO was Hahnlive GmbH who organised and helped before, during, and after the meeting orchestrating the conference.

The abstracts of the meeting were published in HLA 98: S1. From here many thanks to all involved in making this happen.

The plenary sessions, moderated by Falko Heinemann, dealt with immunogenetics (Nils Lachmann showing new ways of HLA antibody analysis, Christoph Gassner reporting on new accepted red cell antigen groups, and Vera Rebmann providing data on the influence of non-classical HLA antigens in transplantation). This session was followed by the traditional transplantation session (Malte Ziemann, reporting on the new DGI recommendation on unacceptable HLA antigen definition, Sven Jörg Kühl showing his view on haplotype vs mismatched stem cell donors in pediatric stem cell transplantation, and Teresa Kauke closing the session with a report on the final cross match prior solid organ transplantation. The meeting continued with presentations from our sponsors (Sabrina König, Inno-train, Kristin Launhardt and Kira Kirchgessner, BAG, Alexandra Pissoke and Sabine Kiessling-Parr, Biotype, Robert Koban, Qiagen, Baron Victor, ThermoFisher. Thereafter, the participants followed the reports of the technical assistance workshop moderated by Achim Jung with Martina Maria Weber, Sascha Janz, Geraldina Luisa Lüders-Zanetti, Maria-Luise Arnold, and Thomas Binder acting as speakers on different

laboratory aspects such as NGS, what antibody response is telling us, and HLA in mating. In the evening, posters and the awards of the DGI were presented. The president of the DGI, Falko Heinemann, awarded Hanna Rohn, next generation, Kirstin Manrau and Sabine Lehninger, technical assistance, Sabine Dahlinger, QM, and Ladan Farnrad and Daniel Sorce, IT. Finally, Constance Schönemann, the Hans-Grosse-Wilde awardee reflected on the history of HLA in the eastern part of Germany.

Early in the morning next day we had oral presentations, followed by the plenary session Big Data, moderated by Ilias Doxiadis, (Wolfgang Kern, presenting ways of leukemia diagnostics, Axel Rahmel, analysing the available organ donation data, and Johannes Fischer reporting on how to deal with the enormous amount of data resulting after HLA and blood group typing). The fourth and last plenary session dealt with Covid-19 moderated by Thomas Grünewald and Ilias Doxiadis, (Stefan Borte showing data on the influence of primordial genes on the outcome of the infection, Christian Jassoy presenting data on isolation and characterization of antigen specific B cells, and Thomas Grünewald elaboration on Covid and breakthrough vaccination). After a short break for regeneration, the sponsored talks were presented: Jessica

Diegel, CareDx, Robert Koban, Qiagen, Erik Bonke, Promega, Dave Lowe, ThermoFisher, and Pascal Van der Weele, GenDx delivered their presentation. The teaching session moderated by Andreas Heinold involved different speakers (Niroshan Nadarajah iCloud based diagnostics, Monika Lindemann, immune response towards SARS-CoV-2, and Adalbert Krawczyk, on the provenience of Covid and prevention). The breaks included presentation from Sabine Scholz, Inno-train, Andreas Heinold, CareDx, Martin Rossmanith, Promega, Peter Diep, ThermoFisher. The last evening session started by a presentation by Christine Heylen, Immucor. Thereafter posters were presented followed by the keynote presentation from Jörg Janne Vehreschild: "Opportunities and risks of digitization using the example of infection medicine". Finally, after the keynote lecture and the introduction of the next conference location a virtual party accompanied by "Swing Delikatessen" was presented. Believe it or not, participants were dancing in front of their pc, laptops and tablets.

It was a long, successful, and interesting conference which made us forget that everything was done online. A final thanks to all people involved in the organization from Leipzig, from the DGI and from the program orchestration and Hahnlive as PCO.

REGISTRY OF UNMET NEED (RUN): OVERVIEW

The RUN Project is an initiative aiming to identify and address inequity in access to transplant for patients with uncommon HLA genotypes, typically from populations who have been historically underrepresented and underserved by global donor inventories. While transplant professionals are generally aware of the gaps within their own countries, through working together as a community we can explore how to best target recruitment of identified ethnicities across diaspora to see how the global network can improve donor prospects for patients in need.

At inception (2017), the RUN group requested that WMDA members submit the HLA profiles of patients for whom no potential match, defined as an 8/8 match at HLA-ABCDRB1, was available. Under the guidance of Martin Maiers (National Marrow Donor Program, United States), data mining efforts in collaboration with WMDA and the RUN project group have yielded thousands of additional HLA genotypes from patients for whom no match was found within the WMDA Search & Match Service database which currently comprises nearly 40 million donors. Following data consolidation and correction, the HLA

genotypes of 3648 patients have been recovered for analysis.

As the project unfolded, the group has identified additional objectives that can help improve the chances of connecting patients in need of transplant with a suitable stem cell donor. Since most unrelated stem cell transplants cross international boundaries, knowledge of the worldwide HLA frequencies is imperative to the unrelated donor search process. To this end, we propose to apply methods and tools used for haplotype frequency analysis of US registry data to the WMDA global database. Using published methods, we plan to produce unbiased, high-resolution haplotype frequencies using all DNA-typed donors. The output of this analysis will be a comprehensive set of HLA frequencies in a consistent electronic format that can be used to inform matching and modelling analyses for search coordinators performing searches in WMDA's Search & Match Service. We will perform a global match rate analysis to determine how well the 38 million donors and 800 000 cord blood units comprising the global inventory are meeting patient need. These frequencies will be instrumental to understanding patient search prognoses by providing insights towards patient ancestry and the reason the search is difficult (i.e. presence of rare alleles, haplotypes, or genotypes). These data will be further used to inform predictive match algorithms, improving their capacity to calculate donor-recipient match predictions.

To improve the quality of data submitted by organisations, we have recently provided some guidance to the community surrounding the reporting of patient and donor ethnicity in a way that standardized, informative, and inclusive. Noting that RUN patient ethnicity and demographic information was reported sporadically and inconsistently, we felt that providing a tool to assist in capturing this valuable information in a consistent manner will strengthen the quality of data, particularly with regards to match prognostication. Using these ethnicity titles and mapping recommendations, we will assign a genetic ethnicity to RUN patients based on their HLA genotypes to better inform our analyses.

Finally, a retrospective analysis of search prospects for RUN patients will be conducted to ascertain whether recent initiatives at diversifying the IMMUNOGENETICS & HISTOCOMPATIBILITY CONFERENCE EFI 2022

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IMPORTANT DATES

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION DEADLINE 17 January 2022

EARLY REGISTRATION FEE DEADLINE **1 March 2022**

REGULAR REGISTRATION FEE DEADLINE 16 May 2022

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content of global donor inventories has been successful in terms of addressing the donor deficit initially faced by these patients. Since nearly four years has elapsed since the RUN project was initiated, it will be informative to repeat RUN patient searches to determine whether changes to global donor pools have translated to improved donor prospects.

The RUN project has the potential to improve patient access to stem cell transplant by providing a more robust haplotype frequency data set reflective of the global population that can be used to strengthen search algorithms and inform the targeted recruitment of donors with the best chance for supporting patients of diverse ancestries who are seeking stem cell transplant. There are some questions to the community which we would like you to respond to.

Questions

- Do you agree with the proposed broad and detailed ethnicity groups proposed? If not, what could be added, changed, or improved?
- 2) Will you be implementing these guidelines (use of self-reporting, proposed ethnicity titles, and proposed mappings) in your organization (if different from your current practice)?
- 3) Please provide any additional feedback surrounding the proposal.

Please send your answers to Martin Maiers (mmaiers@nmdp.org) and Martine Schuit (martine.schuit@wmda.info).

Project Group Members:

Abeer Madbouly Hans-Peter Eberhard Jürgen Sauter Louise Cho Lydia Foeken Machteld Oudshoorn Martin Maiers Martine Schuit Niki Garrett Valerie Stewart Yung-Tsi Bolon Zi Jing Seng

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HLA JOURNAL

Analysis of de novo donor-specific HLA-DPB1 antibodies in kidney transplantation.

Tang C, Unterrainer C, Fink A, Cinca S, Ruhenstroth A, Scherer S, Morath C, Zeier M, Mehrabi A, Süsal C, Tran TH.

HLA. 2021 Nov;98(5):423-430. doi: 10.1111/tan.14422.

A number of recent studies, stemming both from the field of organ transplantation and of allogeneic hematopoietic cell transplantation, have investigated the molecular determinants of HLA-DP immunogenicity, and derived immunogenetic models to identify the alleles associated to clinically-relevant endpoints. In the present study, the Authors analyzed 366 patients who received a kidney transplant at Heidelberg University Hospital, and tried to correlate different models of HLA-DP immunogenicity with development of de novo donor-specific anti-HLA-DP antibodies and with clinical outcome. They reported that none of the models analyzed predicted the development of anti-donor antibodies, but also that both HLA-DPB1 Eplet and Terasaki Epitope (TerEp) mismatches had a strong negative impact on graft survival. Overall, these findings corroborate the hypothesis that matching for HLA-DPB1 at epitope instead of allele level might improve graft survival in kidney transplantation, but also highlight that more research has to be performed to fully understand the links between incom-

By Luca Vago, section editor HLA journal

patibilities, alloreactivity, development of donor-specific antibodies and clinical immune-mediated manifestations.

Inside the pocket: Critical elements of HLA-mediated susceptibility to cervical precancerous lesions.

Gonçalves LB, de França PP, Petry NA, de Souza Xavier MB, de Carvalho NS, Bicalho MDG, Boldt ABW, de Araujo-Souza PS.

HLA. 2021 Nov;98(5):448-458. doi: 10.1111/tan.14429.

One of the main limitations of immunogenetic studies investigating association between HLA and disease is narrowing the scope to identifying risk alleles, without further insights into the molecular determinants of those findings. In this interesting paper, the Authors analyzed the association between HLA-B, HLA-C, and HLA-DRB1 polymorphism with cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN II/ III) in 184 patients and 174 controls from South Brazil, focusing specifically on amino acid residues composing the pockets of the peptide-binding cleft of the respective polypeptide chains. Besides confirming previous work in documenting that HLA-DRB1*13:01 was associated with protection against CIN II/III, while HLA-C*03:04 was associated with susceptibility, they also could show that key peptide-binding groove residues characteristic of those alleles were driving the association, and supported these findings with molecular 3D modeling. In addition to its relevance in identifying individuals with higher risk to develop HPV-related precancerous lesions, this work provide an interesting example of how to better exploit and valorize findings from association studies.



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