

Strategic Plan of the Section Laboratory Medicine/Medical Biopathology of the UEMS 2013-2014

Introduction

Based on the UEMS Strategy (2007-2012) (1) the Section of Laboratory Medicine/Medical Biopathology (LM/BP) has developed this strategic plan. During the meeting of the Executive Board in January 2011 it was decided to make a statement on the position of the Section, which will be linked to a practical strategy. These issues were further discussed within the section at the meeting in May 2011 in Cyprus. This plan will be updated regularly.

1. Position of medical laboratory physicians

The position in medical laboratory of physicians is of key value because of the special medical knowledge and competences.

Depending of the national legislation, making a diagnosis can in many cases only been done under the responsibility of a physician. This will have consequences for the organization of the medical laboratory work. In a medical laboratory both professionals of scientific and medical background should work together, as professionals of both backgrounds can supplement each other.

Declaration Medical Act

“The medical act encompasses all the professional action, e.g. scientific, teaching, training and an educational, clinical and medico-technical step, performed to promote health, prevent diseases, provide diagnostic or therapeutic care to patients, individuals, groups or communities and is the responsibility of, and must always be performed by a registered medical doctor/physician or under his or her direct supervision and/or prescription.”

The Section holds the position that as laboratory diagnostic procedures fall within this definition, physicians should be part of every medical laboratory

2. Political significance of the UEMS Section

One of the most important missions of the UEMS is to be centrally involved in the political discussion concerning health service, medical education and it's practice. The position of Section LM/MB is closely linked to that objective. The Section should be the most important professional organization for laboratory physicians within EU. It is important that all countries are represented, and attend regularly to the meetings, within the UEMS Section.

3.a. Harmonization of postgraduate training of laboratory physicians in the EU

One of the main tasks of the UEMS and UEMS Section is the harmonization of medical profession and promotion of the free movement of medical specialists within the EU. To that end the training of laboratory physicians is being harmonized, but many differences between countries remain. The field of laboratory medicine is divided in different specialties within the EU countries. The specialty of general laboratory medicine (polyvalent) is the most frequent specialty within the EU, with around 85% of laboratory professionals working in “polyvalent” countries. General (polyvalent) laboratory medicine contains all different specialties including clinical chemistry and medical microbiology (transfusion medicine can be included but is a separate specialty more often). The general aim is to unify and harmonize the field of laboratory medicine in the interest of quality and patient interest.

3.b. Curricula of the specializations

The Section has prepared a second edition of "Blue Book" with the curricula of the specializations contained within the Section. The dissemination and use of the Blue Book should be promoted.

3.c. Training of medical specialists in laboratory medicine

Physicians can, based on a training including practical medical experience, perform consultation and interpretation of test results within a medical context. Laboratory professionals of scientific background and with practical laboratory and experimental experience can better perform consultation and interpretation of test results within a technical context. The medical perspective is also important in more respects, such as the development of diagnostic strategies, cost effective use of diagnostic procedures etc.

Both the medical and scientific frameworks of reference considered are complementing, and should be available within the medical laboratory. Legal responsibilities can also be important in this respect, depending on national legislation.

In order to provide sufficient medical laboratory specialists, each country should organize and provide a specialist medical training in laboratory medicine. The Section does only support the situation that registered and legally recognized specialists are being trained, taking into account the EC Directory on mutual recognition of professional qualifications (2).

4. Coordination of CME/CPD in Europe

The Section supports a formal system of continued professional education (including CME) in all EU countries.

On a European level, an independent European organization should look after the accreditation of congresses, symposia and other forms of medical education. The UEMS-EACCME serves as an independent organization for medical doctors. It is of special concern, that independent scientific value of educational information is guaranteed.

5.a. Specialists medical practice quality assurance in Europe

The UEMS considers that quality assurance is an essential component of an agenda focused on high standards of medical practice. Quality assurance is defined as the regular review against defined standards of clinical practice (see Directive on Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare (3)).

5.b. Guideline development

One of the strategies of the UEMS is to establish quality standards for medical practice. The Section is expected to provide evidence-based guidelines which are to become more commonly followed all over Europe. The Section LM/MB supports the development of guidelines in the field of laboratory medicine.

6. Congress

It is one of the objectives of the UEMS to communicate the key role of laboratory specialists to European bodies, European countries and European publics; to communicate facts and ideas for improvements related to the UEMS main interest fields to all the UEMS member European countries, other European medical organizations and to the EU institutions/bodies.

References

- 1) UEMS Strategy. <http://admin.uems.net/uploadedfiles/884.pdf>
- 2) Directive 2006/100EC Mutual recognition on professional qualifications.
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_363/l_36320061220en01410237.pdf
- 3) Council Directive Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+20110119+ITEMS+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN#sdocta1>