



**The Association for
Clinical Biochemistry &
Laboratory Medicine**



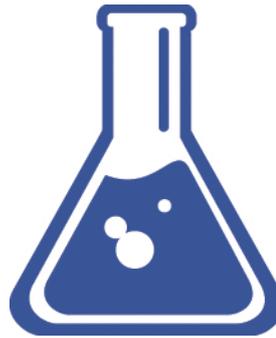
Annual Report

Year Ending 31 December 2020



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Mission and Strategy

The Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (ACB) is one of the world's leading professional membership organisations dedicated to the practice and promotion of Clinical Science. As the major body for Clinical Biochemistry, Immunology and Microbiology in the United Kingdom, we work nationally and internationally to promote the highest standards in laboratory testing and patient care.

Our five-year road map, developed in 2020, lays out our ambition to become the voice of laboratory medicine. We will do this by aligning our activities under a common vision, improving the value of membership and investing in growth for the future.

The three core themes of our strategy are:

- **Innovation** – focusing on how novel tests and industry developments can be introduced at pace.
- **Inclusivity** – ensuring that the profession is open and accessible to all.
- **Environmental sustainability** – influencing laboratory professionals, health professionals and patient behavior to minimise the impact of testing on the environment.

Better Science, Better Testing, Better Care

“We connect, inform and represent a unique community of healthcare professionals and champion the critical role of laboratory medicine in patient care.”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- A new national meetings strategy starting with UKMedLab21.
- Membership growth plan.
- Strengthen our voice with government and media.
- Develop industry partnerships.
- Build our Science Knowledge Hub.
- Continue our digital development.



2020 at a Glance

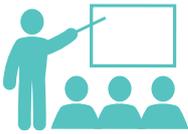
Engaging our community

1 new website


6 Issues of *ACB News*


15 COVID-19 e-newsletters


Getting our voice heard

7 Expert briefings and statements


“”
>30m media reach


67% increase in Twitter followers

Promoting cutting-edge research


750,000 downloads of *Annals*

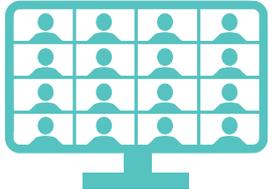

2.04 *Annals* Impact Factor

£50,000 COVID-19 Scientific Scholarships



Sharing knowledge

12 Virtual events


616 online delegates


President's Foreword

As I near the end of my term as ACB President I have much to reflect on. I am sure you will agree that none of us could have predicted the astonishing events of 2020/2021.

It started well: in January 2020 Birmingham hosted our annual Frontiers in Laboratory Medicine (FiLM) meeting. A packed agenda saw speakers and workshops debating management, policy, and leadership issues in Healthcare Science. Delegates, speakers and colleagues in industry gave excellent feedback on the meeting's content and organisation.

Soon after the event, in early February, stories were starting to emerge about a new virus. Then, just a few short weeks later, we were in the throes of a global pandemic and a complete societal lockdown. This was possibly one of the biggest challenges ACB Members have had to face in their careers. The national testing infrastructure was strained to its absolute limit trying to meet daily patient-testing targets for the virus while maintaining the critical diagnostic services that patients rely on 365 days a year.

Our membership – and the profession as a whole – rose to the challenge magnificently and we should look back with pride on our achievements. We have been, and still are, at the centre of a global public health emergency and we have stepped up to the mark and excelled. All this in the face of rising infection rates, overcrowded health facilities and staff sickness.

We also found ourselves in the eye of a media storm as the press clamoured for story after story, facts, and opinions about testing. We quickly assembled a group of experts who gave generously of their time to prepare statements and respond to inquiries – often within truly short deadlines – to ensure that science continued to be reported accurately. My thanks must go out to Rob Shorten, Liz Bateman and Alison Whitelegg who undertook this task in addition to their busy day jobs. Our efforts paid off, though: we have achieved astonishing reach for our expert briefings and fact-checking responses. This, I think, has contributed at least in part to the rapid lift in membership applications towards the end of 2020.

I also want to send an enormous thank you to the Science Media Centre. A charity set up in the early 2000s, its mission is to champion accurate reporting of science. Its contribution has been immeasurable.

We were all busy with our day jobs, but it was essential that the ACB continued to function to keep our community together: we needed to support one another and to keep everyone up to date in a fast-moving situation. My thanks go out to everyone for responding



President
Professor Neil Anderson

“We have been, and still are, at the centre of a global public health emergency and we have stepped up to the mark and excelled.”

so well and engaging in what became a virtual ACB in 2020. We experienced Zoom and Teams meetings, published online articles from the Annals, a digital *ACB News*, an e-newsletter with COVID-19 updates and we reached out to Retired Members.

We could not, unfortunately, find a way to stage Focus in 2020. My thanks and commiserations go out to the Local Organising Committee, presenters and those that had prepared posters, who had all done so much work in the lead-up. Out of that work, though, we're witnessing a phoenix rising from the flames in the form of a rebranded, integrated event – UKMedLab21 – which sets us on a great path for the future.

Dr Bernie Croal will be taking over as ACB President very shortly and I wish him all the best for his tenure. The past year has been challenging but it has also enabled us to build new ways of working that will stand us in good stead in years to come. I look forward to seeing where Bernie takes the ACB next.

I would like give my thanks to the office holders of the ACB and to the ACB management team. Office holder posts are honorary, and I do not underestimate the work you take on while carrying out your day jobs: without your contribution the ACB would not exist. The management team has restructured and brought renewed purpose to the ACB office.

And my last words must be to thank you, the members. I cannot overestimate how important your contribution has been this year. I welcome a new era of public awareness and appreciation of the importance and impact of our profession on the nation's health.



"We're witnessing a phoenix rising from the flames in the form of a rebranded, integrated event – UKMedLab21 – which sets us on a great path for the future."

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Well, my first full year as ACB's CEO has not gone exactly as planned. I started full of ideas on how to work with the President, Directors and Officers to create a vision for the future and the ACB's role within it. An away day was scheduled for 25th March to start scoping out our ambitions and lay down plans for the next five years.

And then the world changed, virtually overnight. It became clear that Officers and Directors would be in the front line, restricting the time and attention they would normally devote to the ACB. We had to adapt quickly.

Within a few weeks the office team was set up to work remotely and we were ready to launch the big programme of change we had planned. By 2020's end we were enjoying improved IT infrastructure, a new website and digital membership platform. We'd also changed our finance platform and refocused our staff responsibilities with a new staffing structure.

Our media response function had to change swiftly, too. From 23rd March we started fielding phone queries from national media about NHS testing arrangements and their robustness. Instant experts, meanwhile, began cropping up all over the place. We helped ACB experts produce and issue scientific briefings to ensure accurate reporting of the science and reinforce the importance of qualified, trained and dedicated professionals. The results were impressive and we achieved a huge reach around the globe.

I am delighted to have worked with Council to agree on innovation, inclusivity and environmental sustainability as the strategic priorities for 2021 and beyond. These core themes will be reflected in all our activities and partnerships. The past year has underlined the importance of working with academia, industry and government to give Laboratory Medicine the voice it deserves.

I look forward to helping amplify that voice in 2021 and to having the opportunity to meet more of you face to face.



Chief Executive Officer
Jane Pritchard

"The past year has underlined the importance of working with academia, industry and government to give laboratory medicine the voice it deserves."

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Pritchard". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Education, Training and Workforce Committee

Supports the promotion and delivery of training for Clinical Biochemists at all stages of their careers.

Provides a co-ordinated training course programme, organising and monitoring in-service training through a network of regional tutors. Monitors and co-ordinates manpower planning for the profession.



Director
Hazel Borthwick

Professional training programmes

The Committee has continued to meet virtually, leading to improved attendance and delivery of key actions. Chief among these was the successful development and hosting of a Clinical Biochemistry virtual education seminar, attracting over 160 delegates. We are now creating and publishing 'Cases for thought' online, which provide real-life Duty Biochemist scenarios examples that Trainees can talk through with their supervisors.

The website's online educational content is being reviewed and the Committee is working with other scientific and medical education providers to explore developing an educational online platform for members. The ACB regional tutor network continues to support all trainees undertaking the STP programmes which contribute to the recent STP curriculum reviews and NSHCS assessments.

HEE Workforce review

Our Workforce team and Director are also attending key meetings relating to the HEE Workforce review. This will review the strategy for Healthcare Scientists and determine the profession's future requirements. One aspect has been working with the National School for Healthcare Science on entry pathways to encourage more people into the laboratory.

"We developed and hosted a successful Clinical Biochemistry virtual education seminar which attracted over 160 delegates"

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Committee to develop more virtual online training courses and resources.
- Aim to reinstate training residential elements in 2022.

Scientific Committee

Responds on behalf of the ACB on all scientific matters of relevance to the practice of Clinical Biochemistry.

The Scientific Committee has continued to support the ACB Executive develop and progress the five-year strategy, while responding to new challenges and opportunities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACB Scientific Scholarships

In 2020, we altered our traditional ACB Scientific Scholarships and, supported by £20,000-worth of funding from Abbott, launched a fast-track process for projects relating to COVID-19.

- We were happy to fund 3 high-calibre applications (updates to be published in *ACB News* and applicants to present findings at future meetings).

Associated Committees and subgroups

These continue their important work:

- The ACB Audit Committee completed and published 2 audits.
- The CSRC published 4 reviews, commissioning 10.
- The Preanalytical Working Group published 2 papers, with 3 studies pending.
- The NICE Working Group coordinated ACB Members' input into 4 specialisms. It is asked regularly for expert opinions on all areas of Laboratory Medicine.
- The Committee have reviewed and approved guidelines from 7 different associations, ranging from guidance on disorders of sexual differentiation to renal association guidance on hyperkalaemia.

Professor Steve Holding, a valuable member of the SACP, is to step down from the Committee as he begins his retirement and will be sorely missed.



Director
Alexandra Yates

“Happy to fund 3 high-calibre applications for projects relating to COVID-19”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Build database of members with a specialist interest to represent the ACB.
- Improve and streamline the scientific scholarship process using lessons learnt from the new fast-track process and with continued industry support.
- Enhance and promote the huge knowledge base available in the AMALCs (Analyte Monographs alongside the National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue).
- Publish series of Toxicology best practice guidelines.

Publications and Communications Committee

Oversees all communication from the ACB to its membership and the public.



Director
Kam Chatha

When the pandemic hit early in the year we had to adapt and scale up our communications resource quickly to cope with massive press interest, keep the membership up to date, while supporting the vital need to share and disseminate critical information within the scientific and NHS community.

We quickly re-organised, creating a dedicated communications response group led by Neil Anderson and forging a partnership with the Science Media Centre to respond, within hours, to fact-checking requests. The group issued a dozen statements and expert briefings which achieved a 30 million-plus global media reach. We took *ACB News* online, developed a regular COVID-19 e-newsletter and provided open access to relevant journal articles.

Twitter has become our lead social media platform during 2020 with a 66% rise in followers. The development of our new website continued as planned, launching in October alongside a new membership database, events system and CPD repository. All of this has improved our capacity for email communication with members.

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Lab Tests Online-UK

The Lab Tests Online-UK (LTO-UK) website helps patients and the public, including healthcare professionals, understand the many clinical laboratory tests that are used in diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of disease.

In 2020, the website exceeded 3.3 million visits, 75% of these from GP systems with integrated links to LTO-UK. This demonstrates the significant benefit gained from integrating links with patient access portals. The biggest source of referrals came from: GP systems (SystemOnline-TPP and Evergreen Life), NHS.UK, NHS Inform Scotland, followed by Patients Know Best and Cancer Research UK.

"Twitter has become our lead social media platform during 2020 with a 67% rise in followers."

This year saw rising interest levels, reflected in LTO-UK activity, in laboratory tests from the media and public due to COVID-19. The LTO-UK team combines running and promoting the website, keeping the content up to date with generating new content.

LTO-UK has no commercial allegiances and support is generously provided by ACB, the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists. We thank Dr Danielle Freedman, Chair of Lab Test Online-UK Board, for her leadership.

***Annals of Clinical Biochemistry*: ACB's official journal**

The Impact Factor (IF) of this key outlet for scientific publishing was 2.04 in 2019, its highest since 2015, with around 750,000 full-text downloads recorded for the second year running. These figures reflect the *Annals*' influence and visibility.

Current metrics for submissions and acceptance rates are also up on last year: an extraordinary feat in an extraordinary year. Our deeply committed and dedicated editorial team has helped minimise the pandemic's impact on the journal's quality and output. COVID-19-related papers have been fast-tracked, and the *Annals* has contributed to the response of the academic publishing sector.

We hope that Best Practice articles (a new category) will soon complement the supply of high-quality review articles received yearly from the Clinical Sciences Reviews Committee. The *Annals* now has just under 650 Twitter followers, almost doubling in a year, with access to tweeted articles free for two weeks.

We welcome Professor Yolanda de Rijke to the editorial team and thank Professor Rien Blankenstein, her predecessor as Dutch Associate Editor, and Dr Gill Rumsby, who is standing down from the Editorial Board, for their considerable contributions over many years.

Finally, Dr Michael Murphy will share the role of Editor-in-Chief with Dr Maurice O'Kane, with a Deputy Editor to be announced shortly and additional Associate Editors in due course.

Find us on Twitter



ACB:

@TheACBNews

*Annals of Clinical
Biochemistry*:

@AnnClinBiochem

Lab Tests Online-UK:

@LabTestsUK

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Cross-committee content development strategy for website.
- Build on profile achieved in 2020.
- Review *ACB News* in consultation with members.
- Grow our Twitter following.
- Sustain *Annals* submissions and acceptance rates.
- Promote Best Practice articles for review.
- Increase penetration and awareness of Lab Tests Online with GP systems.

National Meetings Committee

Organises the ACB's National Meetings on cutting-edge science to serve the membership and clinical medicine community.

FiLM and Focus 2020

In 2020, a Frontiers in Laboratory Medicine (FiLM) meeting, held in Birmingham in January, spearheaded our ACB conference programme. Sessions included:

- Innovating technology, pathology workforce and care pathways
- Innovation in clinical care from theory to practice
- Operationalising innovation
- Pathology networks and learning lessons

Interactive panel discussion encouraged audience participation and introduced a new Young Leaders Programme to encourage Pathology Leaders of the future. This enabled registered delegates to bring a Trainee along at a heavily discounted price.

A wonderful scientific programme was planned for Focus 2020 in Belfast in May . . . and then the world changed. Focus was cancelled. But behind the scenes the team discussed the options. After consultation with members the decision was taken to hold the next conference online in June 2021.

2021 National Meeting

UKMedLab, our newly-branded conference, will include a scientific and education stream, plus a leadership and management stream, to combine previous Focus and FiLM elements. We hope that you will support the Association in this new journey.

The ACB will submit a bid to host the EuroMedLab Congress in 2025. Bids were invited from all regions and put through a process of bid submission and review, then scored by a team from across the UK using criteria set out by the EFLM and IFCC. This resulted in a decision to proceed with the bid from London.

We look forward to seeing you all on screen at UKMedLab21 and hope to see you in person in the very near future.



Director
Sarah Robinson

“UKMedLab, our newly-branded conference, will include a scientific and education stream, plus a leadership and management stream, to combine previous Focus and FiLM elements.”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- UKMedLab, combining elements of Focus and FiLM, will be held virtually in June 2021.
- ACB bids to host EuroMedLab Congress in 2025.

Microbiology Professional Committee

Represents the interests of Microbiologists within the ACB and national professional bodies.

Professional training programmes

Rolling out diagnostics for novel pathogens is a core role of Clinical Scientists in Microbiology and Virology. The dedication of members, and the professionalism of Trainees who have foregone many months of training, have helped bring the pandemic under control and warrants significant praise. Unfortunately, COVID-19 also meant the Committee could not meet the proposed deadline for completing the STP curriculum's long-overdue review, now rescheduled for the September 2022 intake.

Training and Education

We have facilitated numerous online training events for STPs whose training was interrupted by delivering SARS CoV-2 testing and whose placements were cancelled. We would like to thank those speakers who gave up their time for these well-received events.

As face-to-face vetting was unviable, the Committee helped deliver the new Independent Assessment of Clinical Competence (IACC), and engaged with the National School for Healthcare Science (NSHCS) to improve assessments this year.

The latter now allows Biomedical Scientists to apply for HSST posts. The ACB welcomes any move that allows suitably qualified candidates greater access to such posts. We will continue to work with NSHCS to ensure training standards are maintained, producing the Consultant Clinical Scientists our services desperately need.

Funding

Health Education England has announced urgent new funding for STPs and HSSTs, particularly in Microbiology, for entry in September 2021. The Committee has endeavoured to help colleagues nationally take up this opportunity and increase training numbers. We must work with the relevant bodies to ensure that subsequent career opportunities for these exiting Trainees match these impressive numbers.



Chair
Dr Rob Shorten

“We held a successful annual scientific and training meeting in November 2020, the first such Microbiology event to be held online”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Complete microbiology STP curriculum review for September 2022 intake.
- Increase public voice as experts in laboratory medicine and infection diagnostics.
- Link with partners in the Federation of Infection Societies to expand our annual meeting.
- Improve the relevance of the journal offering to Microbiology members.

@TheACBNews using #ACBMicro

Immunology Professional Committee

Represents the interests of Immunologists within the ACB and national professional bodies. The Immunology Professional Committee (IPC) represents the Immunology Professional Group (IPG) within the ACB.

Public profile

This last year Immunologists, alongside our Microbiology and Biochemistry colleagues, have been at the forefront of COVID-19 diagnostics. IPG members have been working tirelessly on COVID-19 serology testing and related research, while IPC members have responded to journalist questions about the immune response to Sars-CoV2. The pandemic has raised awareness of Immunology and diagnostics.



Education

It has again been a successful year for Clinical Scientist training, despite the changes to training and examination brought about by COVID-19. Trainee numbers on the STP scheme remained stable and all completed their training successfully.

The IPC continued its work with medical colleagues and the Royal College of Pathologists on changes to the Immunology FRCPath exams and the exam board. This will remain a major focus, as will the need to recruit more examiners for the FRCPath.



Chair
Dr Elizabeth Bateman

“It has again been a successful year for Clinical Scientist training, despite changes to training and examination brought about by COVID-19”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Continue to raise the profile of Immunology and diagnostics.
- Sustain liaison with medical colleagues and Royal College of Pathologists on FRCPath exams and the exam board.

Around the UK and Ireland

The ACB Regional Committees serve local Clinical Scientists through scientific and training meetings, bursaries and awards. They are vital in keeping the ACB's membership thriving by providing a unique opportunity to network and develop their skills.

North West

Chair:
Dr Shirley
Bowles



- Daniella Clegg (Preston) won the hotly contested Ian Ward Members' Papers Competition for her presentation 'Development of age and sex-specific equations for calculation of adjusted calcium in a primary care population'. Held in July on Zoom, it proved the only, albeit well-attended, Scientific Meeting of 2020.
- 4 new Chemical Pathology Trainees appointed to the region in last 12 months.
- 25 attendees at each of the monthly, virtual format, FRCPath regional teaching sessions.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- To schedule 2 Scientific Meetings, as in previous years.
- To recruit new ACB NW Committee Members, both to fill existing vacancies, and to replace those due to demit at the next AGM.
- To issue a quarterly newsletter to ACB NW Members, starting April 2021.

Northern Ireland

Chair:
Dr Jennifer
Cundick



- Scientific Meeting to mark retirements of Ellie Duly (Consultant Clinical Scientist, South Easter Trust) and Dr Janet Chestnutt (Consultant Chemical Pathologist, Northern Trust).
- COVID-19 marks the end of Scientific Meeting and energies diverted to establish mass testing capacity.
- ACB Member Chemical Pathologist Professor Ian Young, guided the country's response as Northern Ireland Chief Scientific Advisor.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- The NI Pathology Information Management Systems (NIPIMS) Programme is to deliver a regional LIMS system, to go live in the first Trust in 2022.
- Work under way to replace the blood sciences pre-analytical and analytical equipment in all HSC labs by the end of 2021 (Automated Laboratory Management System / ALMS Project).

Republic of Ireland

Chair:
Dr Jennifer
Brady



- Virtual teaching sessions to support 13 regional Trainees preparing for FRCPath examinations, organised with the Association of Clinical Biochemists in Ireland (ACBI).
- ACB Members contributed to development of new MSc in Clinical and Diagnostic Biochemistry at University College Dublin, with first intake of students in September 2020.
- Regional audit group set-up in collaboration with the ACBI, with study carried out on lab responses to COVID-19.
- Annual Scientific Meeting held in January 2020 on such topics as allergy testing, adding value to laboratory testing and intelligent liver function testing.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Hold a virtual Scientific Meeting in January.
- Increase activity of the audit group.
- Continue to support Trainees with FRCPath preparation.

Scotland

Chair:
Rebecca
Pattenden



- Spring and Autumn Scientific Meetings cancelled due to COVID-19.
- Series of 6 virtual presentations, starting in August 2020, hosted on COVID-19 and impact on laboratory and hospital services.
- Audit Group, led by James Logie, completes audits on EQA practice and non-HDL cholesterol reporting. BNP testing audit is ongoing, with more audit topics in pipeline.
- AGM postponed to June 2020. Several changes to Committee membership noted. We extend both our thanks to those who left the Committee and welcome our new Members.

South West and Wessex

Chair:
Roanna
George



- 1 regional Trainee study day. Topics included an overview of inherited metabolic disease, hypoglycaemia and a mock OSPE.
- FRCPath tutorials continued via Teams.
- 2 Clinical Biochemists completed full FRCPath.
- 1 Clinical Biochemist sat September 2020 FRCPath Part 1 exam and passed.
- Poster competition to enable people to highlight current work.

Southern

Chair:
Dr Robyn
Shea



- 2 virtual Committee Meetings held on Teams.
- Southern Region newsletter launched.
- 2 Scientific Meetings held (one incorporating AGM), including a very well attended virtual meeting.
- 2 Bill Richmond prizes awarded.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Expand repertoire of lunchtime virtual presentations.
- Host virtual John King award for Trainee members.
- Continue recently re-established audit activity.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Re-establish a regional audit group.
- Reinvigorate Scientific Meetings.
- Continue to build on networking in the region.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Hold 3 Committee Meetings, ideally at least 1 physical version.
- Attempt to hold 3 Scientific Meetings, ideally at least 1 physical version.
- Fill all vacant positions on the Committee.

Trent and Northern Yorkshire

Chair:
Dr Hannah Delaney



- 2 Committee Meetings in 2020.
- AGM held in Sheffield in March with 20 Members attending.
- 2 Scientific Meetings held: 1 in March on Toxicology in Sheffield, and another, on Regional Research into COVID-19 Immunity, held virtually.
- Regional Audit Meeting.
- 3 applicants competed for the Geoffrey Walker Award in 2020.
- Weekly virtual event piloted in Yorkshire and Humber for FRCPath Trainees.
- Clinical Biochemistry Trainees Community discord group for Clinical Scientist and medical Trainees launched.
- Joint BSI-ACP Clinical Immunology training days.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- 2 Scientific Meetings, including the 2020 postponed one.
- Microbiology Professional Committee developing a resource to provide training for STP Trainees, to include live and/or recorded webinars on topics often covered by secondments to other laboratories.

Wales

Chair:
Dr Sharman Harris



- 2 Regional Members achieved FRCPath Part 1, 1 completed full FRCPath in 2020.
 - Successful translation of Committee, AGM and Members' papers meetings into a virtual format. Dr Jessica Harris's paper 'Investigating the use of biomarkers to assess the risk of AKI progression' wins prize at November virtual Members' Papers meeting.
 - Weekly Trainee tutorials resumed virtually: 4 STPs start in September 2020.
 - Committee demit positions successfully replaced.
 - Audit programme continuing.
- Chair Dr Sharman Harris is moving on to pastures new. We thank her for her significant contribution. Susan Prosser is the incoming Chair.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- April 2020 'Genomics in Healthcare' Scientific meeting rescheduled for June 2021: a mix of virtual and face-to-face.
- Regional audits programme created: two audit presentations anticipated in 2021.
- Build on increased participation in virtual AGM in June 2020 in 2021.

West Midlands

Chair:
Pervaz Mohammed



- ACB activity planning resumes after pausing due to network consolidation.
 - One of the ACB's largest regions with some 167 members.
 - 2 Scientific Scholarship winners: Gemma Reidy, University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire, working on *Profiling cytokine storm and markers of endothelial dysfunction during severe COVID-19 infection*. Adrian Shields, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Clinical Immunology Service, University of Birmingham, working on *Can the measurement of anti-SARS-CoV-2 salivary antibodies enhance the sensitivity of seroprevalence studies and are these antibody responses clinically relevant?*
- Both will be sharing updates with regional and national colleagues.

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Rejuvenated Regional Committee.
- Activating ACB national strategy in West Midlands.
- 3 events planned: Trainee Scientific Competition for Gaddie Medal; Scientific Meeting with SAS Trace Elements Group in late Autumn; Relaunch of the Audit Committee.

Federation of Clinical Scientists

Certificated Trade Union, with full national recognition and negotiating rights, which represents the interests of Clinical Scientists in the NHS and other related areas. ACB Members can opt-in to become Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS) member.

Trade Union discussions

The FCS switched to virtual meetings in 2020, carrying out training via video link and processing much more data.

Its work with the NHS Staff Council Staff Side and the Social Partnership Forum (SPF) has grown. More interaction has produced new guidance on a range of issues, from managing sickness related to COVID-19 to annual leave, while joint briefings have led to requests for input into many recent guidance documents.

Pensions

Some work programmes, unrelated to COVID-19, have been postponed. The problem of the life-time allowance was tackled in the 2020 budget and a consultation on the remedy for the pension's situation resulting from a ruling about the unlawful discrimination in transfer to the 2015 pension scheme has ensued. We await changes to the pension contribution rates.

Casework and FCS representative training

We thank Paul Cawood who, as our Scottish regional representative, was active for many years within the Scottish NHS negotiating mechanisms. We wish him well on his retirement.

Nationally, this appears to have been a quieter year for cases although some required more support. We are very grateful to FCS local and regional reps – but where there are gaps in our network would encourage member involvement.

Short interactive teleconference training sessions for our regional and local representatives have proved highly successful, but we hope to reinstate face-to-face training when we can.

Finally, our thanks to the ACB office staff and Emma Lenehan, our CSP industry relations representative, without whom none of this would have been possible.



Director of Regulatory Affairs and FCS Chair
Dr Emma Lewis



Deputy Director and FCS Secretary
Lisa Garrison

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Continue online training for FCS representatives.
- Reinstate face-to-face training.
- Encourage members to fill gaps in local and regional representative network.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This statement was adopted at the ACB's 2020 Annual General Meeting and guides the ACB's decision making process, particularly in terms of the awarding of prizes, funds and awards.

The impact of COVID-19 on colleagues with Black, Asian and other minority ethnic heritage has shone a light, yet again, on inequities in Healthcare. The BMA reported that, while around 21% of all Healthcare workers are BAME, 63% of this percentage are dying from COVID-19. For medics, meanwhile, the figures are 44% and 95% respectively.

The pandemic has shown that long working hours are not the only – or even the best – means to deliver great leadership and effective service. We've learnt many lessons on being inclusive along the way.

Throughout, the ACB has worked to achieve the values of our EDI statement. In line with our new website, we have attempted a more systematic approach to the collection of data on membership diversity. An *ACB News* article highlighted the importance of such data collection.

A nominations Committee, reporting to the ACB Executive, now ensures a broad and inclusive approach when seeking nominations for President Elect and all roles within the ACB. A remuneration Committee has been formed to ensure a fair and transparent HR strategy and pay review system for ACB employees.

We have increased the visibility of our membership's diversity in our communications and are completing a second Benchmarking exercise on diversity and inclusion in STEM organisations.



ACB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion
Dr Rachel Wilmot

"The pandemic has shown that long working hours are not the only – or even the best – means to deliver great leadership and effective service. We've learnt many lessons on being inclusive along the way."

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Create a diversity network on the ACB website.
- Look to create grants addressing resilience/ sustainability of women and marginalised groups within the profession, enabling all to fulfil their potential.

Awards, Funds and Prizes

The ACB awards, funds and prizes help support Members in their careers and recognise excellent work within the profession. The 2020 awards and prize winners are congratulated here.



ACB Scientific Scholarships

In 2020 the ACB took a fresh look at its traditional Scientific Scholarships and, with £20,000-worth of sponsorship from Abbott, enabled funding through a fast-track process for a series of projects relating to COVID-19. This resulted in the funding of 3 high-calibre applications:

Adrian Shields – *Can the measurement of anti-SARS-CoV-2 salivary antibodies enhance the sensitivity of seroprevalence studies and are these antibody responses clinically relevant?*

Gemma Reidy – *Profiling Cytokine storm and markers of endothelial dysfunction during severe COVID-19 infection*

Joe Frost – *Linking iron with inflammatory profiles and clinical outcomes in COVID-19*

President's Shield

Awarded by the current President of the ACB to mark an outstanding contribution to the Association:

- Dr Rob Shorten, Chair of the Microbiology Professional Committee
 - Dr Elizabeth Bateman, Chair of the Immunology Professional Committee
- for their work in promoting and developing their respective specialities within the Association and beyond.



Membership Awards

Members who have made a distinguished contribution to the development of either the Association or the profession in general can be awarded one of three honorary titles: Honorary, Emeritus or Fellow.



In 2020 the Membership Award winners were as follows:

| Nominated by | Nominee | Award |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Southern Region | Professor Martin Crook | Honorary |
| Southern Region | Dr Andrew Taylor | Honorary |
| Trent, Northern and Yorkshire Region | Dr Mick Henderson | Honorary |
| Southern Region | Anne Trewick | Fellow |
| Trent, Northern and Yorkshire Region | Dr Dermot Neely | Fellow |

Finance Director's Report

In what's been a challenging year, I'd like to thank our Chief Executive and the office team for their continued hard work and commitment to the organisation. They have maintained the office function despite the challenges of working from home, restructuring and installing new finance and operating systems.

The pandemic severely limited our income as:

- National meetings – FiLM took place in January, but we were unable to run Focus in May.
- Investment values fell, though recovered later.
- Advertising income from *Annals* fell.

Amid all the turmoil, however, we were able to make cost savings and to invest in our office function:

- A new digital platform was installed, incorporating the website, membership system and with an online events facility.
- Upgraded IT – includes faster broadband, plus new cloud-based finance and operating systems that facilitate working remotely.
- As I write, all staff can work from home and, overall, are doing so.

We reviewed the storage of documents, and – where possible – either disposed or archived them. This created sufficient space to consolidate our office function and our meetings/conferencing facilities on one floor, freeing up the top floor for rental.

During a difficult year we have remained within our forecast budget deficit of £120,000 and laid the foundations to take us forward into 2021, when we will diversify our income streams by:

- Maximising income potential from Tooley Street.
- Developing long-term strategic partnerships with industry.
- Growing our membership.
- Growing the profile, reach and scale of our new national meeting UKMedLab, which will replace Focus.

Once again, thank you to Jane and her colleagues. And finally, thank you to Michael Kyriakides for his assistance in drawing up our accounts and to our auditors Buzzacott.



Director
Dr Mike Bosomworth

“During a difficult year with huge disruption we have managed to finish the year within budget”

Looking forward to 2021-22

- Long-term strategic planning for our finances.
- Ethical review of our investments.
- New staff pension scheme.
- Maximise income potential of our property investment.
- Improved payment systems for Members.



The Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine

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