

Editorial

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A modern and pragmatic definition of Laboratory Medicine

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Herein we propose a modern and pragmatic definition of Laboratory Medicine. Laboratory Medicine may henceforth be defined as “a clinical science and discipline, devoted to the quantitative measurement, or qualitative assessment, of any substance which can be assayed in any type of biological fluid of any animal species, thus including humans, for either medical or research purposes. The results of these measurements are translated into actionable information for improving the care and/or maintaining the wellness of both a single individual and an entire population”. This definition implicitly encompasses the use of a vast array of analytical methods, especially including – though not essentially limited to – colorimetric, enzymatic, turbidimetric, electrochemical, immunochemical, separation, nuclear magnetic resonance, cytochemical, clotting, molecular, cytogenetic and flow cytometry techniques [1]. These tests can be used for the screening, diagnosis, staging, prognostication and therapeutic monitoring of a kaleidoscope of pathological conditions, as well as for establishing health, fitness and predisposition towards certain activities and behaviors.

Whilst we favorably acknowledge that this advocated definition may stimulate additional and constructive debate on this matter, we also hope that it may be seen as a good starting point for widespread discussion and/or endorsement. We further refer to the EFLM document

“Syllabus for postgraduate education and training for Specialists in Laboratory Medicine” for garnering specific indications on the skills, knowledge and competence of specialists in Laboratory Medicine [1].

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Reference

1. Jassam N, Lake J, Dabrowska M, Queralto J, Rizos D, Lichtinghagen R, et al. The European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine syllabus for postgraduate education and training for Specialists in Laboratory Medicine: version 5 – 2018. *Clin Chem Lab Med* 2018;56:1846–63.

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