



Summary of the Third Annual Fall National Molecular Microbiology

Diagnostics Users Group (NMG)

October 18-19, 2010

Hamilton, ON

Background: The National Molecular Microbiology Diagnostics Users Group (NMG) is a newly established working group that includes approximately 120 laboratorians using molecular methods for clinical microbiology diagnostics. Members are from hospital, private and public health laboratories from across Canada.

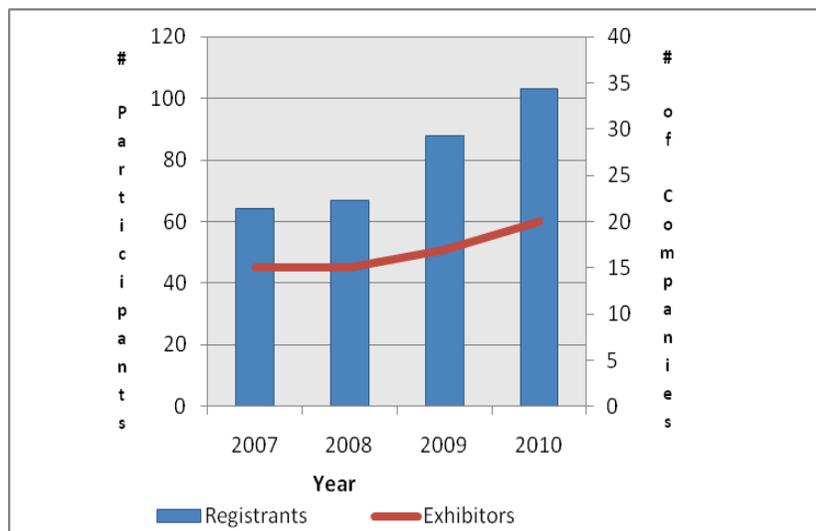
The group was formed in March 2006 at the Annual AMMI Canada – CACMID Meeting with the following goals:

- Develop an integrated national network of clinical microbiology laboratory experts to support molecular diagnostics by collaboration and communication through discussion groups and an annual fall meeting.
- Make recommendations, set guidelines and develop proficiency and policy regarding molecular microbiology testing.
- Develop processes for sharing methods, specimens, data and information.

Annual Fall Meetings have taken place to discuss proficiency activities from throughout the year, current molecular testing issues, and to obtain updates on new technologies, assays, trouble-shooting and instrumentations through industry sponsored workshops.

Registrants: A total of 103 participants from across Canada registered for the NMG as of Oct. 11, 2010. The graph below indicates number of participants and the number of companies attending the conference (Figure 1).

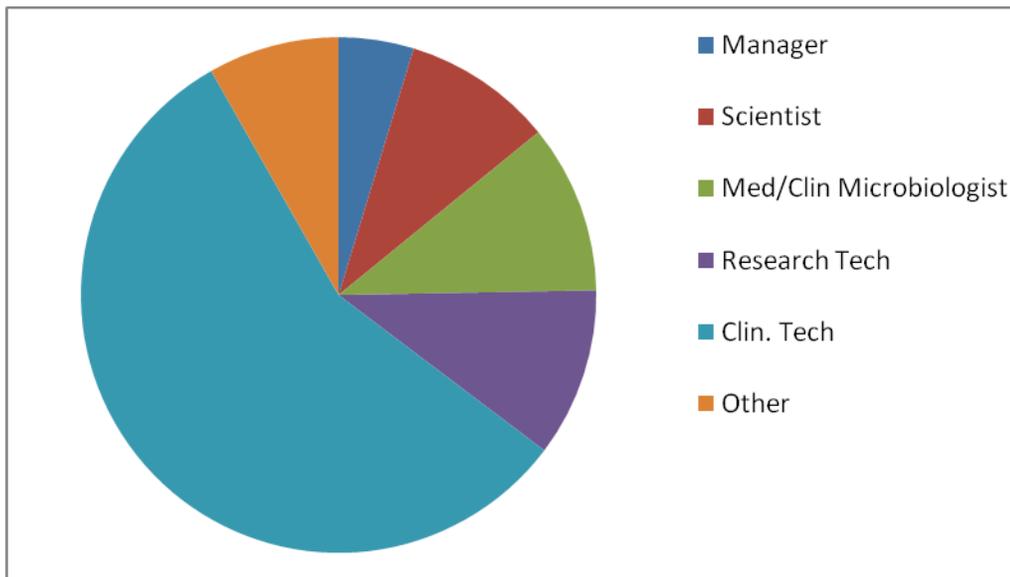
Figure 1. Number of Participants at the NMG from each Province.





The participants who attended came from various aspects of the clinical microbiology laboratory. The breakdown for the participants based on their job title is shown in figure 2. The largest group attending the conference were clinical technologists, including MLTs, Senior Technologists and Technical specialists. An almost equal number of Clinical scientists (PhDs) and research technologists/technicians followed. There were also medical microbiologists and laboratory managers present.

Figure 2. Breakdown of participants by job title.



Industry Participation:

Nineteen companies contributed to the conference as exhibitors (17), workshop presentations (7), and/or sponsors (7) for meals, coffee breaks and bags. Additionally the CPHLN attended as an exhibitor for the first year. Topics for the one hour workshops ranged from updates on new technologies for pathogen identification, primer/probe synthesis and quality control, overview of extraction methods and thermal cycler platforms, multiplex testing for enteric pathogens, review of the current state of *C. difficile* testing including the role of PCR and the role of high resolution melt analysis in diagnostic testing.

Exhibitor tables were placed in the lobby where coffee breaks and meals were held. This allowed numerous opportunities for interaction between participants and industry. Industry participants were free to attend all workshops and presentations held the first day and the morning of the second day. Exhibitor time was increased to a second half day, which allowed greater time for interaction.

Sponsorship was indicated with signage at the event (beside the meals and at the registration desk) and with a handout inserted into the registration package of all participants. Money from workshops, sponsorship and exhibition was used to offset costs of the meeting and to supply travel grants to 19 participants travelling from out of province, who would otherwise have not been able to attend.



Figure 3. Participation of companies as Exhibitors, Workshops, and/or Sponsorship

Sponsorship	Workshop	Exhibitor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACMID • Roche Diagnostics • Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics • Qiagen Inc. • Abbott Molecular • Zeptomatrix • InterMedico • Daan Diagnostics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated DNA Technologies • EraGen Biosciences • Qiagen Inc. • Inverness Medical Canada • astra Diagnostics Canada • Abbott Molecular • Becton Dickinson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott Molecular • Becton Dickinson • bioMérieux • BioNuclear Diagnostics • Canadian Public Health Laboratory Network • Cedarlane Laboratories • Daan Diagnostics • D-Mark Biosciences • EraGen Biosciences • Integrated DNA Technologies • Inter Medico • Inverness Medical Canada • Luminex • Qiagen • Roche • Somagen Diagnostics • ZeptoMetrix

Travel Grants:

Travel grants were made available to participants travelling out of province. Participants applied for travel grants prior to the meeting. Nineteen were approved to cover costs of flight and accommodation. The desire is that we will be able to generate enough income next year to hand out increased number of travel grants.

Working Group Sessions:

The participants discussed how the NMG should move forward with the following issues:

1. Proficiency panels for the future (including B. pertussis and 16S sequence identification)
2. Verification, validation and on-going quality management for quantitative assays.
3. Standardization of quantitative assays.

Champions for each group were identified and plans were made to initiate follow-up.



Conference Evaluation:

Results from a conference evaluation indicated that the majority of participants were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the meeting, as well as would attend upcoming conferences in future years. The facilities of the conference (theatre and lobby at SJH) and location (Hamilton, ON) were well liked, however, many felt they were too tight and that the meeting had outgrown the location. Overall, the talks were well received and little changes were suggested.

Some minor issues identified included:

-first day too long

-Lunch was too late

-the space was tight for exhibits and coffee breaks

The above issues were discussed at the core group meeting following the conference and will be addressed in next years' conference to be held **October 17-18, 2011 in Toronto, ON.**