

Summary of the First Annual Fall National Molecular Microbiology

Diagnostics Users Group (NMG)

October 20-21, 2008

Hamilton, ON

Background: The National Molecular Microbiology Diagnostics Users Group (NMG) is an association that includes approximately 100 laboratorians using molecular methods for clinical microbiology diagnostics. Members are from hospital, private and public health laboratories from across Canada.

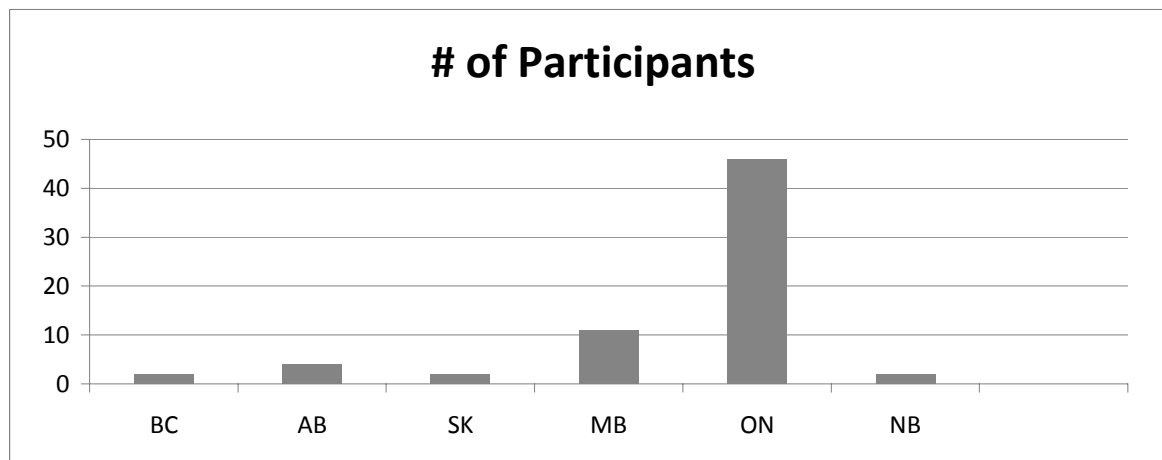
The group was formed in March 2006 at the Annual AMMI Canada – CACMID Meeting with the following goals:

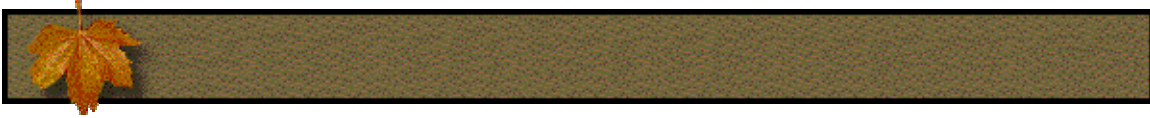
- Develop an integrated national network of clinical microbiology laboratory experts to support molecular diagnostics by collaboration and communication through discussion groups and an annual fall meeting.
- Make recommendations, set guidelines and develop proficiency and policy regarding molecular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

The second annual Fall Meeting was planned 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. A copy of the program can be found at <http://www.cacmid.ca/nmg2008prelimprognew.doc>.

Registrants: A total of 67 participants from across Canada registered for the NMG. The graph below indicates the breakdown of the province individuals were from (Figure 1). Ontario participants included those from Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, and London.

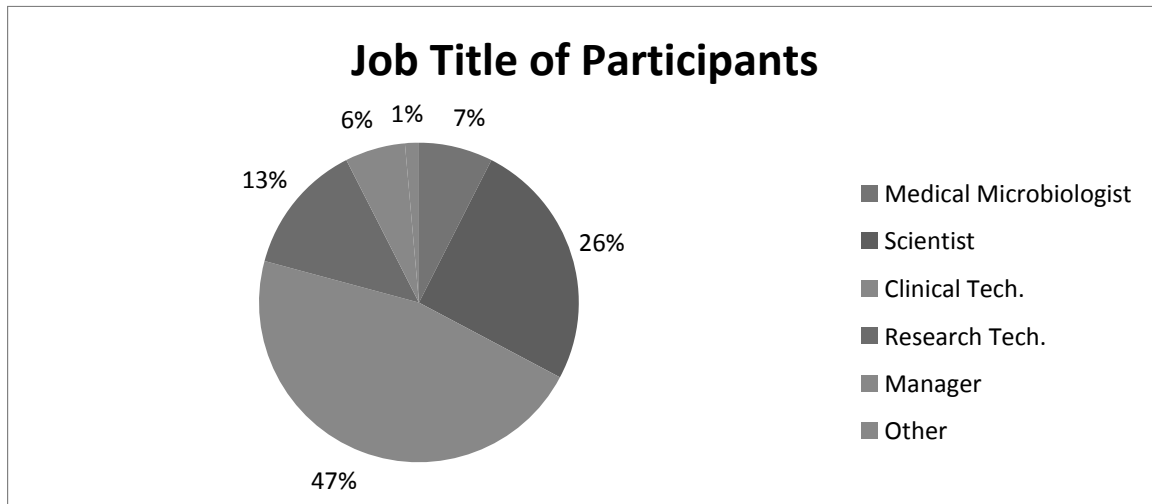
Figure 1. Number of Participants at the NMG from each Province.





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:

Fifteen companies contributed to the conference as exhibitors (8), workshop presentations (4), and/or sponsors (7) for meals, coffee breaks and an evening dinner and social event on Monday evening. An additional 4 companies sent staff to attend the meeting. Topics for the one hour workshops ranged from updates on new technologies, trouble-shooting, strategies, review of infectious disease testing, proficiency testing and quality control.

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.

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 participants travelling from out of province.

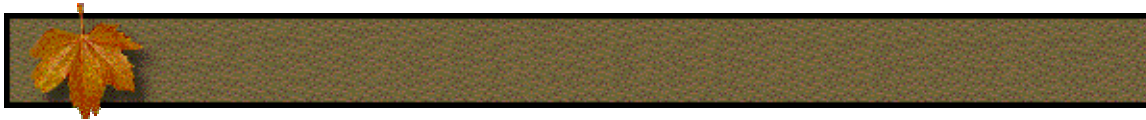


Figure 3. Participation of companies as Exhibitors, Workshops, and/or Sponsorship

Sponsorship	Workshop	Exhibitor
Roche Diagnostics Siemens Medical Solutions Diagnostics Inc. Abbott Laboratories BD Diagnostics InterMedico Invitrogen Sanofi-Pasteur CACMID	Roche Diagnostics Inverness Gen-Probe Public Health Agency of Canada National HIV Reference Laboratory Qiagen Inc	InterMedico BD Diagnostics Qiagen Inc. Applied Biosystems bioMerieux Canada Inc. Inverness Medical Canada Somagen Gen-Probe

Travel Grants:

Travel grants were made available to participants travelling out of province. Approximately 12 participants applied for travel grants of \$250 each, which were meant to offset travel costs.

Working Groups:

The participants were divided into two groups based on interest in the discussion topics:

1. Controls (internal, extraction, etc.). When and how many do you need?
2. Verification, validation and on-going quality management for quantitative assays.

The groups worked on their topics for 2 hours followed by a 15 minute presentation and group discussion. Working groups were established to continue discussions to come up with recommendations for verification, validation, and on-going quality management for quantitative assays, and the inclusion of controls in molecular assays.

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 approved by the majority of participants as recurring site for the annual conference.