Editorial

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Urinary sediment: still an important diagnostic tool

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This special issue of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine is based on the lectures delivered at the international symposium “Urinary sediment: still an important diagnostic tool”, which took place in Rome on the 4th and 5th of December 2014, thanks to the full support of “A. Menarini Diagnostics”.

The symposium was the realization of a project which I conceived years ago on the conviction that the urinary sediment examination, in spite of its long history and the long-lasting neglect by both clinical pathologists and clinicians, is still a valuable and irreplaceable tool for the diagnosis of the diseases of the kidneys and of the urinary tract [1–3].

The symposium, which featured 11 speakers from seven countries and was attended by more than 170 clinical pathologists from eight European countries, encompassed an opening lecture on the history of urinary microscopy and three sessions.

The first session was on to the modern view on some key particles of the urinary sediment namely, casts, lipids and crystals. Experts in the field described how these particles, when correctly identified and integrated with other urinary, laboratory and clinical findings, can play an important diagnostic role in a wide spectrum of diseases, including hereditary disorders such as Fabry disease for lipids, and 2,8-di-hydroxyadenine deficiency for crystals.

The second session was on External Quality Assessment (EQA) programs on Urinary sediment, which International Guidelines on urinalysis recommend as a key instrument to improve the quality in everyday work [4, 5]. Also this session was run by international experts, who described EQA programs as they are carried out in northern Europe, the United States, and Italy.

The third and last session was on the recent advances in the automation of urinary sediment analysis. Today, automated analyzers occupy an important place in large clinical laboratories. To me, by education a fervent supporter of manual microscopy, it is surprising to see how many, and which, improvements have occurred in recent years in the field of urine sediment automation, including the introduction of phase contrast images.

It has been my great pleasure and privilege to organize the symposium and to serve as guest editor for this special issue of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine.

I am very grateful to all the speakers for their very interesting presentations and to the Editor-in-Chief of this journal for allowing us to publish the papers which represent the content of this special issue.

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References


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