

European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST)

Unratified minutes of the Meeting on 1 April 2001 at the 11th European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Istanbul, Turkey

Chairman Prof. Ian Phillips

Secretary Dr. Derek Brown

A list of attendees who signed the register is attached.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Prof. André Bryskier

Dr. John Degener (deputised by Dr. A.I. deNeeling)

Dr. Martin Steinbakk

Margaret Harrison (deputised by Dr. John Broughall)

Dr. Gunnar Kahlmeter

Prof. Ludo Verbist

Dr. Selma Uzunovic-Kamberovic

Prof. Ian Phillips commented that efforts had been made to avoid clashes with other ECCMID meetings and, as requested by members last year, the meeting was scheduled for the day before the scientific sessions began. However, several members were speaking at other pre-Congress meetings and others had difficulty arranging flights to arrive early enough for the meeting.

2. **Minutes of meeting in Stockholm, 31 May 2000**

Approved as a correct record.

3. **Matters arising**

3.1 ***Subcommittee membership***

Dr. Derek Brown reported that a list of members of Subcommittees was sent out with the minutes of the last meeting. The details are also available in the recent EUCAST Newsletter.

4. **Statement from ESCMID President Elect**

Prof. Roger Finch, the ESCMID President Elect spoke on behalf of the ESCMID Executive Committee. He thanked Prof. Phillips, who retires later this year, for his work as Chairman of EUCAST. As part of the portfolio of Professional Affairs the operation, function and future of EUCAST has been examined and Prof. Finch outlined the future arrangements. The activities of EUCAST would be supported financially by the Executive. There will be direct communication between the Executive and EUCAST in that reports would be from made to the Executive twice a year. Over the next few months there would be consultation, led by Dr. Gunnar Kahlmeter, with professional groups in different countries to ensure that the activities of EUCAST are supported by these groups. He noted that EUCAST has advisor status at the NCCLS through the Chairperson and that there was a willingness to listen to European views. Prof. Phillips will work with Dr. Kahlmeter to ensure a smooth transition of the role of Chairperson and Dr. Brown will remain as Secretary for the immediate future.

5. **Main Committee membership**

Prof. I. Phillips reminded members that as well as being experts in their own right they are expected to represent their national societies and should have the support of their national societies. Members should be reporting on EUCAST activities to their societies, and members should also be presenting the views of their societies to EUCAST. By the time of the next EUCAST meeting, in 2002, most members will have served two two-year terms and, according to the EUCAST constitution, it will be necessary for members to confirm that they have the continued support of their national groups. However, there may also be changes in the organization of EUCAST following the appointment of the new Chairperson.

The pharmaceutical industry and device manufacturers' representatives should also be confirmed. Dr. Bob Badel (USA) reported that an International Susceptibility Testing Device Manufacturers Association (STMA) had just been formed and it was agreed that current device manufacturers' representatives on EUCAST would talk to this organization regarding representation on EUCAST. Dr. Brown reported that it has been proposed that Dr. John Broughall replaces Margaret Harrison as the device manufacturers' representative, but that should now be subject to any further discussions among device manufacturers.

Other changes to membership were:

Belgium: Prof. Jan Verhaegen replaces Prof. Ludo Verbist

Romania: Noted that there is no representative and a nomination is required.

6. **Subcommittees**

Prof. I. Phillips reminded members that there were now several EUCAST documents either published in CMI or in draft form, and that members should be ensuring that the national groups they represent are aware of the documents and any comments should be made to EUCAST.

6.1 ***Terminology***

Prof. I. Phillips reported that the second edition of the Terminology document, E.Def 2.1 dated May 2000, was published in CMI 2000;6:503. It is intended that the next version will be expanded to include fungi and possibly other organisms, but contributions from relevant groups are required. The most contentious definitions have been those related to microbiological and clinical susceptibility. Both are now included.

6.2 ***Breakpoints***

Prof. I. Phillips reported that the definitive version of the document on determination of antimicrobial susceptibility test breakpoints, E.Def 2.1 dated August 2000, had been published in CMI 2000;6:570. Of particular note was that while the data provided by pharmaceutical companies was the same as that provided to NCCLS, the required format was different in that MIC ranges were required and disc diffusion data could not be accepted as primary data. The breakpoint committee would work with industry to ensure that dossiers presented were as required in advance of meetings to set breakpoints.

In December 2000 the breakpoint committee met to set a breakpoint for linezolid. The virtually unanimous decision of the committee is in press in CMI. NCCLS breakpoints have subsequently been set and are more complex than EUCAST

breakpoints. Dr. A.I. de Neeling reported that in the Netherlands there had been discussions concerning different dosages of linezolid. Prof. Phillips replied that EUCAST breakpoints were based on a standard dosage of 600mg and invited comments and relevant data on other doses to be sent to EUCAST.

Dr. Bob Badel asked about the relationship between breakpoints agreed nationally, through the European community and through EUCAST. Prof. Phillips replied that drugs may be registered in Europe either centrally through the European Medicines Evaluation Agency (EMA) or through national routes with mutual recognition. Pharmaceutical companies may follow either route. The EMA have indicated that they will find breakpoints agreed by EUCAST useful, but the national route is still available. Dr. Anne Harris added that the mutual recognition route allows countries to opt out and both the central and national routes may be followed. Prof. Phillips also mentioned that the EMA may require re-registration of agents after five years and will require data that are based on standardized methods such as those proposed by EUCAST.

Dr. B. Badel highlighted the difficulty STMA faces in planning products when EUCAST breakpoints may be different from, for example, NCCLS.

6.3 ***Dilution methods***

Dr. Derek Brown reported that the definitive document on determination of minimum inhibitory concentrations of antibacterial agents by agar dilution, date June 2000 was published in CMI 2000;6:509. The equivalent document for broth microdilution is in the final stages of preparation as a discussion document. There are some issues relating to control organisms which are yet to be resolved, but the discussion document will then be published as an insert in CMI **[Action Dr. D. Brown]**.

Dr. Mark Jones asked if EUCAST documents would be available collected together in a single volume. Dr. Brown replied that all published documents would be available in pdf format on the ESCMID web site. Dr. Arne Rodloff felt that studies validating EUCAST methods against established methods will be important for national groups who have their own methods.

Prof. Phillips commented that studies have shown that results with standard methods including Mueller-Hinton and Iso-Sensitest media showed that they gave very similar results for most agents. Dr. Mark Jones asked if there were exceptions. Prof. Phillips replied that there are small differences for aminoglycosides and quinolones, but that results were very different with daptomycin. Dr. Brown pointed out that only Mueller-Hinton medium could be used in the EUCAST reference method.

6.4 ***Intracellular pathogens***

In the absence of the Subcommittee Coordinator, Dr. Geoff Ridgway, Dr. Brown reported that a discussion document on susceptibility testing of intracellular pathogens (E.Dis 6.1) is ready for submission to CMI **[Action Dr. D. Brown]**.

6.5 ***Mycobacteria***

In the absence of the Subcommittee Coordinator, Dr. F. Drobniowski, Dr. Brown reported that he had no news of progress on the draft prepared some time ago by Dr. Drobniowski. Dr. Drobniowski will be asked for information on the current situation after this meeting **[Action Dr. D. Brown]**.

6.6 ***Fungi***

Dr. Manuel Cuenca-Estrella reported on behalf of the Coordinator, Dr. Juan Luis Rodriguez-Tudela. There have been two meetings of the Subcommittee in the last year, in Amsterdam and Geneva. A sub-group has been set up to consider antifungal breakpoints and a study has been undertaken to assess the reproducibility of the proposed standard method for fermentative yeasts. The Subcommittee is being expanded to widen representation from European countries. Standards were being developed for non-fermentative yeasts and moulds. Preliminary results of the reproducibility study on fermentative yeasts were presented and correlation of MIC results is very good. Work is in progress to select quality control strains and to establish breakpoints.

In response to questions on the relationship to NCCLS methods, Dr. Cuenca-Estrella replied that the NCCLS method is inadequate, there are differences between the EUCAST and NCCLS methods and that the EUCAST method was an improvement on NCCLS. The EUCAST method has 2% glucose added to the medium, a higher inoculum, uses of flat-bottomed microwell plates, and reads plates with a spectrophotometer after 24h incubation. Trailing endpoints are a problem after 48h. The method gives different results to NCCLS for some strains and breakpoints may be different.

In response to questions about publication, Dr. Cuenca-Estrella reported that the method for fermentative yeasts was almost complete. Prof. Phillips noted that this should be published in CMI as a discussion document [**Action Dr. JL Rodriguez-Tudela**]. It was also reported that a review on antifungal susceptibility testing is soon to appear in a supplement to CMI. Dr. Badel suggested that the data might also be presented to NCCLS.

6.7 ***Automation***

In the absence of the Subcommittee Coordinator, Prof. Raymond Auckenthaler, there was no report. It is intended to produce a discussion document and Dr. Brown will contact Prof. Auckenthaler about this after the meeting [**Action Dr. D. Brown**].

6.8 ***Molecular Methods***

Prof. Peter Hawkey, the Subcommittee Coordinator, reported that there had been little response to a questionnaire on molecular methods that had been distributed last year. The importance of finding out what was being done in clinical laboratories was emphasized. Dr. Brown explained that it had not been possible to put the questionnaire on the ESCMID web site last year, but it could now be done. Prof. Hawkey agreed to review the questionnaire and send it again to Dr. Brown. Prof. Hawkey also said that a review was being drafted for publication as a discussion document, and the questionnaire results would be included in this [**Action Prof. P. Hawkey**].

6.9 ***Quality Assurance***

Dr. Derek Brown reported that the collection of potential reference strains had been expanded to around 400 potential organisms (included Dr. Thornsberry's "CDC set"). EUCAST reference MIC methods had now been agreed for agar dilution and were close to being agreed for broth microdilution so the strains could be tested when funding was obtained. The cost of maintenance and distribution of the collection was again highlighted.

The second objective of the Subcommittee was to produce guidelines on quality assurance for routine laboratories and a discussion document is in the late stages of drafting [**Action Dr. D. Brown**]. An ECCMID symposium on Quality Assurance of Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing was to be held on 4th April at 14.00.

6.10 **Other aspects of Subcommittees**

Dr. Jana Kolman asked if there was any published guidance on susceptibility testing of *Borrelia*. Dr. Brown replied he knew of none and no one else present knew of any other source of guidance .

Dr. Eddie Power asked if other relevant documents would be linked to EUCAST documents on the ESCMID web site. It was agreed that this could be done if appropriate links are suggested. Dr. Power also asked about the process for returning comments on published documents and it was explained that an address for this is provided at the end of each document.

Prof. Phillips pointed out that some of the Subcommittees are close to achieving their objectives and will then be disbanded. However, there are other areas of susceptibility testing which have not yet been addressed, e.g. anaerobic organisms, disc diffusion methods, interpretative reading, and new Subcommittees may be set up for these. Dr. Joan Fung-Tomc asked whether the issue of different disc contents would be considered and Prof. Phillips replied that this had already been raised by Prof. André Bryskier.

Prof. Tom Bergan suggested that antivirals were also an important area that needs to be addressed.

7. **Relationships with other organisations**

7.1 Prof. Phillips reported that he had attended the twice-yearly meetings of the NCCLS AST and that NCCLS and EUCAST had much in common. He had not taken a European view to NCCLS because in the absence of EUCAST reference methods there was no European view to take. In the meantime he had reported on NCCLS meetings in the EUCAST Newsletter. He has found it difficult to get collective EUCAST comments on NCCLS documents back to NCCLS in time for meetings. Dr. Badel suggested that email should be used as much as possible.

7.2 Dr. Rodloff pointed out that EUCAST documents are not endorsed by societies in different countries and their standing is unclear. Prof. Phillips replied that it is intended to discuss the situation with individual societies.

7.3 Dr. Anne Harris asked if the quality control ranges in the EUCAST methods were based on reproducibility studies as undertaken by NCCLS, or whether the EUCAST and NCCLS methods were so similar that no differences would be expected. Dr. Brown replied that the agar dilution methods were very similar. The control target values were based on different sources in Europe and were very close to the midpoints of the NCCLS ranges for most agents. Dr. Joan Fung-Tomc asked how close to control target values MICs should be to be acceptable and Dr. Brown replied that the standard indicated that MICs should be within one dilution of target values, but it was noted that with some organism-agent combinations this is difficult to achieve. Dr. Antonio Anso asked if control strains with specified resistance mechanisms would be available. Dr. Brown replied that the extended collection of reference strains would include such strains.

- 7.4 Prof. Phillips reported that the Centre European de Normalisation (CEM), the standards organization in Europe, have a Subcommittee called Technical Committee 140. Several years ago the committee considered the introduction of legally binding European standards for all aspects of susceptibility testing but was persuaded that this should be left to professional organizations. Prof. Phillips has reminded CEM of what we are currently doing.
- 7.5 Prof. Phillips reported that he and Prof. Finch had visited Dr. Aronson at the EMEA and confirmed that when they are licensing drugs they are interested in having breakpoints which have been reached by professional consensus and supported EUCAST activities in this area.
- 7.6 Prof. Phillips reported that Dr. Bob Rennie, Chairman of the Canadian External Quality Assurance Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, has expressed an interest in an association with EUCAST.

8. Finance

Prof. I. Phillips reported that the financing of EUCAST activities in the past has been sponsored by industry. In the future EUCAST would be supported centrally by ESCMID, which should put EUCAST on a more sound financial footing.

Funding of meetings remains the most significant issue. Funding an additional day at ECCMID for Committee members might be possible but the difficulty in avoiding clashes with other meetings is considerable. Independent meetings are very expensive and would reduce attendance by observers, but Dr. Krassimir Metodiev suggested that if independent meetings were possible Bulgaria would be an economic venue.

9. Any other business

9.1 *EUCAST Newsletter*

Dr. Brown reported that the latest EUCAST Newsletter was published in February 2001.

9.2 *ESCMID web site*

Dr. Brown reported that the ESCMID web site (www.escmid.org) has recently been upgraded. The section for EUCAST still needs some updating but is now available for use by Subcommittees (through the EUCAST Scientific Secretary, Dr. Brown). EUCAST minutes, published documents and the Newsletters will also be on the site.

9.3 *The next meeting of the EUCAST Main Committee*

This is scheduled to take place at ECCMID 2002, Milan, Italy, 24-27 April 2002.

Attendees who signed the register

Name	Country
Dr. Acuner Ibrahim Cagatay	TURKEY
Dr. Anso Antonio	SPAIN
Arendrup Meike	DENMARK
Dr. Badal Robert E.	USA
Prof.Dr. Bergan Tom	NORWAY
Dr. Broughall John	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Brown Derek F.J.	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Butler Dorothy Anne	UNITED KINGDOM
Colla Martin J.	THE NETHERLANDS
Dr.Cornaglia Giuseppe	ITALY
Dr. Cuenca-Estrella Manuel	SPAIN
Dr. Dalhoff Axel	GERMANY
Dr. De Neeling A. I.	THE NETHERLANDS
Dr. Espinel-Ingroff A.	USA
Prof.Dr. Finch Roger G.	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Flamm Robert	USA
Fung-Tomc Joan	USA
Dr. Gesu Giovanni	ITALY
Dr. Goldstein Fred W.	FRANCE
Dr. Grimm Heinz	GERMANY
Dr. Gür Deniz	TURKEY
Harris Anne M.	UNITED KINGDOM
Prof.Dr. Hawkey Peter	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Ibert Hilja	FRANCE
Dr. Jones Mark Edward	THE NETHERLANDS
Dr. Khan Zia Uddin	KUWAIT
Dr. Kolman Jana	SLOVENIA
Prof.Dr. Langsadt Leon	SLOVAK REPUBLIC
Machka Konstanze	GERMANY
Mansfield Maureen	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Marcel Jean-Pierre	FRANCE
Dr. Meis Jacques F.G.M.	THE NETHERLANDS
Prof.Dr. Metodiev Krassimir	BULGARIA
Prof.Dr. Mittermayer Helmut	AUSTRIA
Prof.Dr. Phillips Ian	UNITED KINGDOM
Dr. Power E. G. M.	UNITED KINGDOM
Prof.Dr. Reller L. Barth	USA
Prof.Dr. Rodloff Arne C.	GERMANY
Dr. Schülin Tanja	THE NETHERLANDS
Dr. Shahani Aruna	INDIA
Dr. Shawar Ribhi M.	USA
Dr. Sheehan Dan	USA
Prof.Dr. Stanescu Doina	ROMANIA
Dr.Dr. Tambic-Andrasevic Arjana	CROATIA
Dr. Thornsberry Clyde	USA
Dr.Udo Edet Ekpenyong	KUWAIT
Dr.Verbeeck Frank	BELGIUM
Dr.Verweij Paul Eduard	THE NETHERLANDS
Vidalenc Thierry	FRANCE
Werling Hans Otto	GERMANY
Wheatley David	USA
Dr.Wood Martin John	UNITED KINGDOM