

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Since 2011, NordicAST has been a working group for methodology in antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST), organized by the Nordic Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (NSCMID). The group members are appointed by the Swedish Society for Clinical Microbiology (three members), the Norwegian Working Group on Antibiotics (NWGA; three members), the Danish methodology group (DANRES-M; three members), and the Finnish methodology group (FIRE; three members). One member represents the Icelandic Laboratory for clinical microbiology. The maximum number of regular members attending a board meeting will thus be 13.

The scope of the group is AST methodology issues. An important part of this task is to maintain breakpoint tables based on EUCAST recommendations, adapted to Nordic traditions and translated to Nordic languages, especially the comments that will be communicated to clinics. Other central activities are to arrange an annual AST workshop for Nordic laboratories, and to provide guidance on how to detect important resistance mechanisms.

In 2020, NordicAST only had one regular onsite board meeting (in Stockholm/Krusenberg in the beginning of March). COVID-19 pandemic forced us first to postpone and later cancel the annual AST workshop in Gothenburg. The group continued its work in Zoom meetings in September and December. The workshop was replaced by three 2-h webinars in November-December which achieved high numbers of participants. The main topics were follow-up and proceeding of the EUCAST new definition of I, ATU's (area of technical uncertainty) and rapid AST from blood cultures in Nordic laboratories. Otherwise the board continued its regular tasks, ie. updating the breakpoint tables, maintaining the website (www.nordicast.org), updating and translating methods documents to English and providing guidance on detection of important resistance mechanisms.

By the end of 2020 the regular members of the group were Anna-Karin Smekal (SE), Annika Wistedt (SE), Christian G. Giske (SE), Iren Høyland Löhr (NO), Arnfinn Sundsfjord (NO), Karianne Wiger Gammelsrud (NO), Barbara J. Holzkecht (DK), Ulrik S. Justesen (DK), Robert Skov (DK), Kaisu Rantakokko-Jalava (FI), Nathalie Friberg (FI), Heikki Ilmavirta (FI), and Kristjan Helgason (IS). In addition to the regular members, Gunnar Kahlmeter and Erika Matuschek are permanently associated members representing the EUCAST Development Laboratory, and Lise Hulløen-Orø (NO) is a permanently associated member with particular responsibility for organising the annual workshop.

The group was chaired by Iren Høyland Löhr in 2020. Kaisu Rantakokko-Jalava was the scientific secretary, Ulrik S. Justesen the treasurer, Kristjan Helgason the webmaster, Barbara J. Holzkecht the breakpoint table coordinator (assisted by Anu Pätäri-Sampo, Anna-Karin Smekal and Karianne Wiger Gammelsrud), Robert Skov the scientific program coordinator of workshop (assisted by Christian Giske and Kaisu Rantakokko-Jalava) and Lise Hulløen-Orø the workshop coordinator (assisted by Anne-Mari Rissanen).

In 2020 NordicAST generated a deficit of 154.734,35 DKK (see separate economic balance report). This was due to lack of income from the workshop. 31.12.2019 the balance was 425 789,43 DKK (see economic balance report).

Stavanger/Turku/Odense, February 27, 2021

On behalf of NordicAST



Iren Høyland Löhr
Chairman



Kaisu Rantakokko-Jalava
Scientific secretary



Ulrik S. Justesen
Treasurer