



EVD-LabNet Newsletter, December 2023

About EVD-LabNet

EVD-LabNet is a multi-disciplinary network of expert laboratories. The aim of EVD-LabNet is to strengthen Europe's laboratory capacity and capability to respond to emerging, re-emerging and vector-borne viral disease threats. The network laboratories are located in the EU/EEA, EU candidate countries, and will be expanding to the EU neighborhood countries. These laboratories have a strong basic and/or translation research competence in virology and human (reference) diagnostics and/or experience in diagnostic test development for viral pathogens. The network is a continuation of ENIVD that was founded about 30 years ago and has been known as EVD-LabNet since 2016.

Scientific Advisory Board and Management Team Meetings

The second scientific advisory board meeting and management team meeting for EVD-LabNet was held on 05 October 2023. The agendas included financial and administrative discussions, specific contract three deliverable updates and specific contract four pre-planning.

EVD-LabNet Webinar #2 – 2023 Emerging Viral Disease Wrap-Up

The 2nd webinar for 2023 was hosted on October 30th and chaired by Luisa Barzon (Univ. of Padova) and Anna Papa (Aristotle Univ. of Thessaloniki). Presentations were:

- **Tatjana Vilibic-Cavlek & Maja Bogdanic** - Department of Virology, Croatian Institute of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia.
Lecture: **"An update on arboviral infections in Croatia"**
- **Annapaola Rizzoli & Giulia Mencattelli** - Research and Innovation Centre, Fondazione Edmund Mach, San Michele all'Adige, Italy.
Lecture: **"West Nile virus in Europe: beyond the bird routes"**
- **Teodora Buzharova** - Laboratory of Virology, Institute of Public Health, Skopje, North Macedonia.
Lecture: **"CCHFV cases in North Macedonia"**
- **Anna Papa** – Department of Microbiology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
Lecture: **"Aigai virus; A new species in the genus Orthonairovirus"**

EVD-LabNet Training #2 – 2023 Phylogeography and Molecular Epidemiology

EVD-LabNet hosted its second training event of 2023 in October and the three sessions had >60 registered trainees for the sessions listed below.

- October 2nd
 - Introduction to molecular epidemiology and phylogenetics – Bas Oude Munnink (Erasmus MC)
 - Tree building – Frederic Lemoine (Pasteur Institute)

- October 3rd
 - Hierarchical clustering methods (neighbor-joining, single linkage, etc.) – Claudia Swart-Coipan (RIVM)
 - Minimum spanning trees – David Nieuwenhuijse (Erasmus MC)
 - Maximum likelihood and Bayesian phylogenetics – Maja Stanojevic (University of Belgrade)
- October 4th
 - Case studies – Matthijs Welkers (Amsterdam UMC)

Scientific Support

ECDC is preparing a technical document covering “*The risk of Tick-borne encephalitis virus transmission via substances of human origin*” and EVD-LabNet was invited to provide input on the virological aspects of the risk. EVD-LabNet members from Erasmus MC, University of Helsinki, and University of Ljubjana are currently supporting ECDC. The document will be published on the ECDC website in the spring 2024.

2022 External Quality Assessment (EQA) of alphaviruses

In 2022 an EQA for molecular detection of emerging alphaviruses (including Sindbis virus, O'nyong'nyong virus, Mayaro virus, Barmah Forest virus, Ross River virus, Eastern equine encephalitis virus, Western equine encephalitis virus, and Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus) was initiated. The EQA recruited 23 participants. Individual results were reported back to the participants to support timely corrective actions if needed. In-depth analysis is currently ongoing and will be presented in a full technical report and manuscript for a wider audience, Q1 2024. The EQA was a collaboration between Aix Marseille University, ANSES-Maison-Alfort and RIVM.

2023 External Quality Assessment (EQA) of mosquito-borne viruses

In 2023 an EQA for molecular detection of dengue virus, chikungunya virus, Zika virus, Japanese encephalitis virus and yellow fever virus was initiated. Thirty-seven institutes signed up for the EQA. Panels were sent in November, and thus far, 35 laboratories have responded. With the responses from the 35 laboratories, we will soon work to analyse the data and provide results back to the laboratories, and a technical report to ECDC and EVD-LabNet members.

Upcoming activities.

- Training 3 (February 2024): Virus Culture, Characterization, and Neutralization - Belgrade, Serbia (**Registration is now closed**)

For more information please contact at: EVD-LabNet@RIVM.nl

