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IFDAT – International forum for drug and alcohol testing, 12–14 April 2010, Barcelona, Spain

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The second programme of its kind globally, the highly successful, collaborative, productive and energizing IFDAT – International Forum for Drug and Alcohol Testing, was held in Barcelona, Spain, from 12–14 April. IFDAT was attended by over 100 delegates, conference sponsors and exhibitors from the international workplace drug and alcohol testing industry. Representing over 20 countries, the delegate professionals, speakers, and presenters included employers, service agents, an international publisher, and workplace testing suppliers. The purpose of the forum was to exchange knowledge, learn about new technology, and support the evolution and growth of the emerging international workplace drug and alcohol testing industry. This purpose was accomplished. Delegates from around the globe exchanged their experiences and thoughts about effective workplace drug testing programmes over two days of intensive presentations and panel discussions. The presenters and panelists included drug and alcohol testing professionals, authorities, and intellectuals from around the world.

IFDAT conferences are planned for every 18 months, and the next Forum, to be held in Houston, Texas, USA is in the planning process for 2011. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

IFDAT Forum Review

A wide variety of topics was presented by professionals from many parts of the world at IFDAT. Worldwide workplace drug and alcohol testing, alternative testing methods, legal challenges in testing, International Medical Review Officer Services, new technology in testing, background screening, and testing in the aviation industry were among the topics addressed. Following is some detail of the topics covered, which should encourage any individual or organization interested in the emerging international workplace drug and alcohol industry to attend future forums and become part of the growth and development of this important industry.

- *Worldwide testing overview from around the world*
This session included featured presenters who shared their perspectives on testing in the USA, South America, Canada, Australia/New Zealand, Europe and India/Singapore.
- *Oral fluid workshop*
The value of this hands-on demonstration of oral fluid testing was appreciated by the delegates in attendance.
- *Legal challenges, international collections, and worldwide drug and alcohol training*
This session reviewed the goals and objectives for the future growth of international drug and alcohol testing, the current state of global knowledge on legal authority and challenges for workplace drug testing, international collections, the hurdles that must be overcome, and worldwide drug and alcohol training, challenges, and solutions.
- *International MRO services*
The Medical Review Officer's function and role as it has evolved in the USA, the role of MRO service support from a Swedish perspective, and experiences with workplace drug programmes in the Port of Barcelona, were discussed in this dynamic session.

- *Roundtable discussion: How can we start an international network of MROs?*
Perspectives, ideas, future standards and challenges in international MRO services and MRO training were discussed in this interactive and highly engaging discussion.
- *New edge technology in alcohol and drug testing*
Phosphatidylethanol in blood (B-PEth) as a marker of alcohol abuse, information technology for drug and alcohol testing, a lot-cost high-throughput onsite screening method, drugs in oral fluid and hair: advantages and drawbacks to routine testing, and the significance of ethyl glucuronide in urine and hair in the control of alcohol abstinence were presented in this in-depth, scientific and information technology updating session.
- *Testing in the transport, military, criminal justice, and background screening industries*
This session reviewed international background screening and the experience with drugs control in Catalonian roads.
- *Domestic and international testing in the aviation industry*
The topic, *Drug and Alcohol Testing in the Aviation industry: where does it fit?*, an Australian airline's experience with an aviation-regulator-mandated drug and alcohol testing programme, drug and alcohol testing at FedEx, and the prevention of substance use in aviation were discussed by a panel of aviation industry professionals.

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Roundtable discussion: Drug and alcohol testing in the aviation industry: where does it fit?

The spirited discussion on this topic was a fine example of the importance of considering individual country perspectives when discussing drug and alcohol testing goals and objectives.

There was a remarkable degree of consensus among the forum delegates and presenters relative to the foregoing topics and the important basic programme elements essential for an effective drug-free workplace prevention programme irrespective of the various speakers' country of origin. These elements included the availability of employee assistance; a policy developed with employee and union involvement and voluntary programme participation/consent; programme transparency; an understanding of legal authority to test; programme safeguards and

procedures; thorough consideration of the types of tests that will meet a particular workplace's programme objectives; the development of alternative drug and alcohol testing methodologies; sensitivity to confidentiality and privacy; employee and supervisor education; training and awareness strategy; family and community programme involvement; and an intervention, rehabilitation, and programme monitoring component.

Clearly, IFDAT conferences will be critically important to the growth and continued development of individual country and organization/employer drug and alcohol testing programme policies, global workplace drug and alcohol testing, scientific innovations, product and service development, drug and alcohol testing, and programme administration.