



BCNetter

Issue No. 5, September 2017



Participants at the biobank training for pathologists and pathology/histology technicians, Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357, May 2017

Message from the Editor

I am pleased to introduce this third and final 2017 edition of BCNetter, which provides updates on the activities and events organized by the network in the past six months.

Most of the efforts have been focused on education, training, and awareness programmes targeting not only biobank staff, scientists, and researchers that use biobanks but also other stakeholders and professionals who play important roles in biobanking and research. The training for pathologists conducted in May at the Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357, in Cairo, was attended by 29 local and international participants from 11 countries. More than 50 ethics committee members, researchers, and policy-makers also attended the open forum, which provided the opportunity for networking and raising awareness, and for discussions about the role of biobanking in research, the benefits of sharing biological resources for international research collaboration, and the ethical implications.

Human biological samples with associated data stored in biobanks and databases are of no use if they are not being used for research. In the rapidly growing –omics technology, more and diverse resources are needed for studies that will have positive impacts on health care. The resources can only be used if they are of good quality and researchers know where they are located. The knowledge gained through the education and training programmes is already empowering BCNet members by putting in place procedures and protocols to ensure that high-quality materials are being collected and stored. The accessibility of available resources can be enhanced through participation in the BCNet Catalogue programme, which was established to provide visibility to samples in members' biobanks. After the pilot phase, which involved four biobanks, the programme is being upgraded and new members have started registering their biobanks. The progress of the initiative will be presented at Global Biobank Week in Stockholm, Sweden, in September 2017 to increase its visibility and to encourage international collaboration.

A joint event with Bridging Biobanking and Biomedical Research across Europe and Africa ([B3Africa](#)) planned for November 2017 will be an excellent opportunity for BCNet institutions to present, in a seminar, research projects conducted in collaboration with local biobanks that address issues of health relevance. Members will also benefit from the B3Africa training on the application and use of the B3Africa open-source informatics platform being developed for use in biobanks with limited resources.

I will retire from my position as Head of the IARC Laboratory Services and Biobank Group (LSB) in September and would like to thank all BCNet members and partners for your cooperation and for giving me the opportunity to coordinate the network. I will return to IARC in a different capacity, as a Senior Visiting Scientist, early next year to support the continuation of BCNet and related activities.

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Updates from the Education and Training Working Group



Biobank Training for Pathologists and Pathology/Histology Technicians

As part of its training programme, the Education and Training Working Group organized a Biobank Training Workshop for Pathologists and Pathology/Histology Technicians, which was hosted by the Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357, in Cairo, on 22–24 May 2017. The workshop was co-funded by

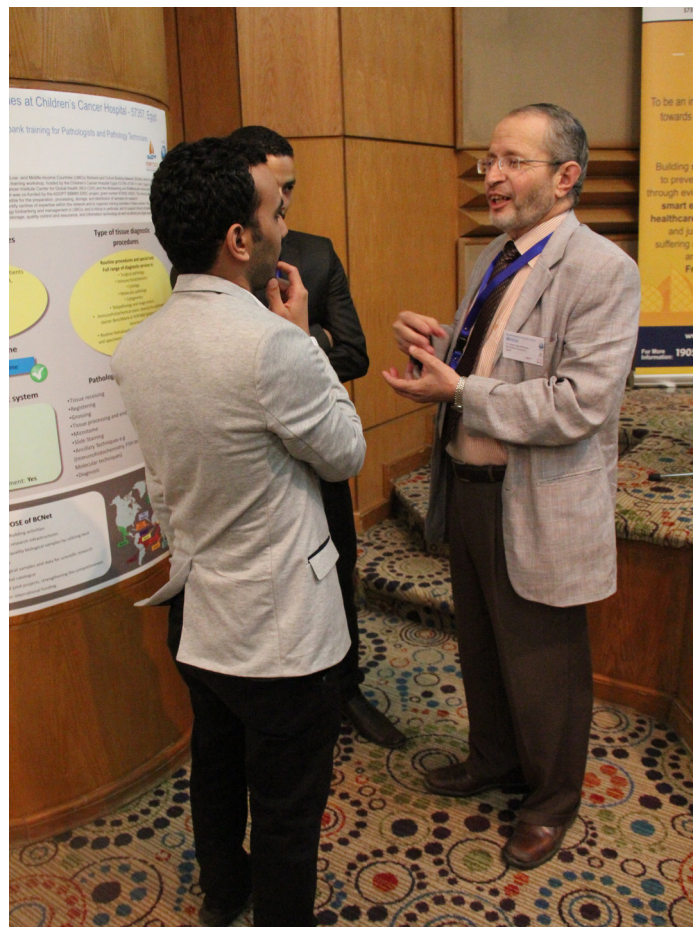
IARC, the United States National Cancer Institute Center for Global Health (NCI-CGH), and the ADOPT Biobanking and BioMolecular resources Research Infrastructure–European Research Infrastructure Consortium (BBMRI-ERIC) project grant No. 676550 H2020.

A course specially designed to align pathology and biobanking practices

The procedures adopted in pathology laboratories have an impact on the quality of the samples and data that are transferred to the biobanks for future research use. Accordingly, BCNet members had identified the need for biobank training for pathologists and technicians from their institutions.

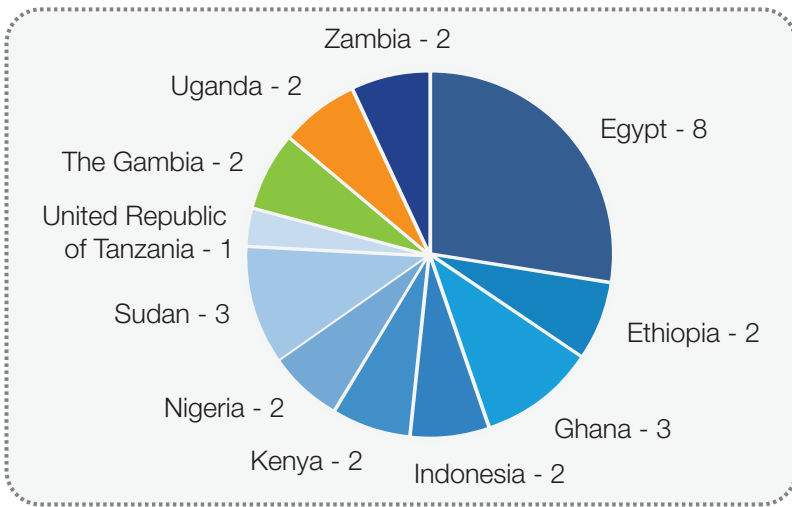
The programme consisted of online training combined with an in-person training session in Cairo. IARC, in partnership with the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (CTRNet) and the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER), provided access to an online training course on basic biobanking. In addition, an open forum to discuss ethical, legal, and social issues (ELSI) was organized, targeting the public, policy-makers, ethics committee members, and researchers who are important stakeholders in biobanking and research.

Specific biobanking challenges were presented by the trainees in a poster session, which created the opportunity for knowledge sharing, comparison of the different local conditions and expertise, and the exchange of ideas. Participants presented real-world examples focusing on country-specific rules, regulations, and laws that govern biobanking in research and clinical settings.



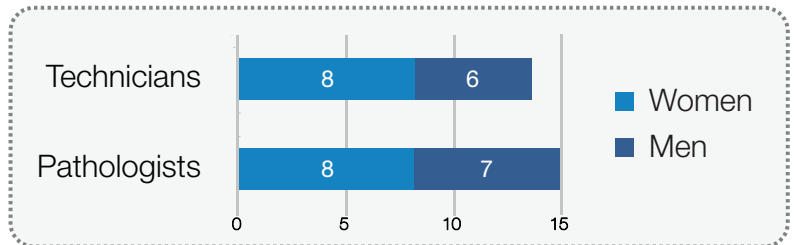
During the poster session, participants shared about their respective biobanking activities, challenges, and solutions.

Training was delivered by 8 international trainers (from IARC, NCI, BMMRI-ERIC, and Applied Research on Cancer [ARC-Net]) and 12 local trainers (from Children’s Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357). A total of 29 participants – 21 international and 8 local – attended the two-day training course, and 50 people attended the open forum. The balance between pathologists and technicians and between women and men enriched the course from different perspectives.



Professionals from 11 countries attended the in-person workshop in Cairo.

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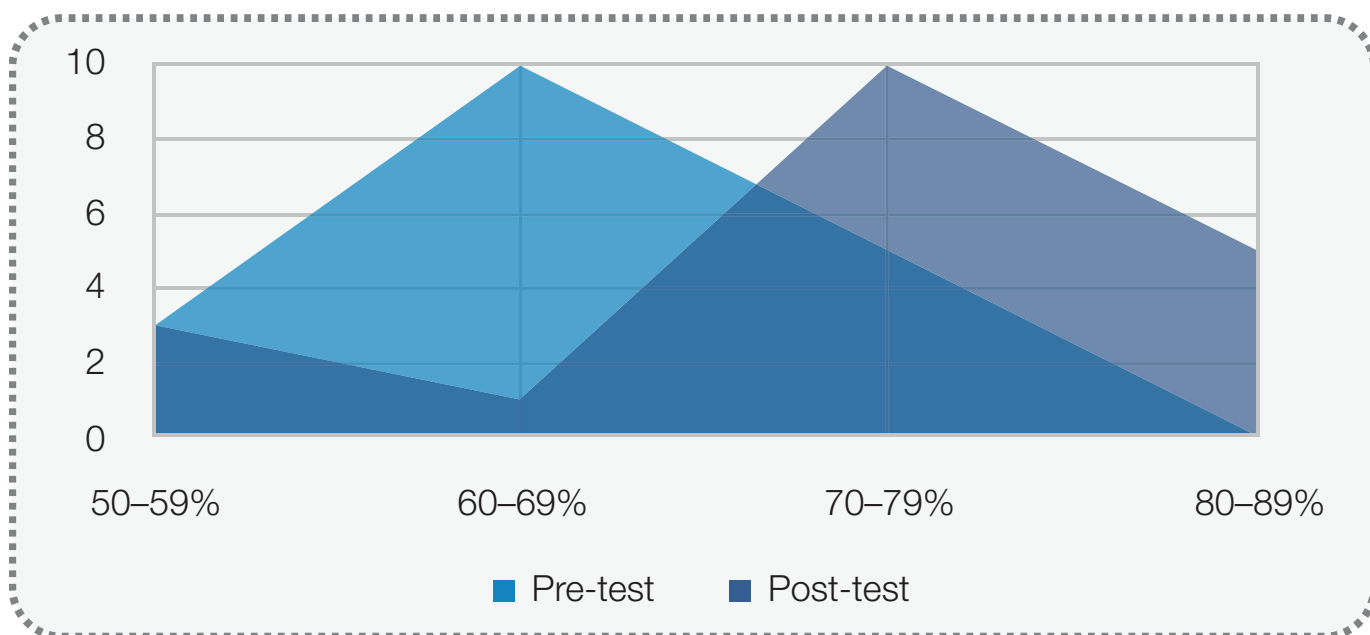
The training session was highly interactive, and participants could learn from each other’s experiences.

Training Topics

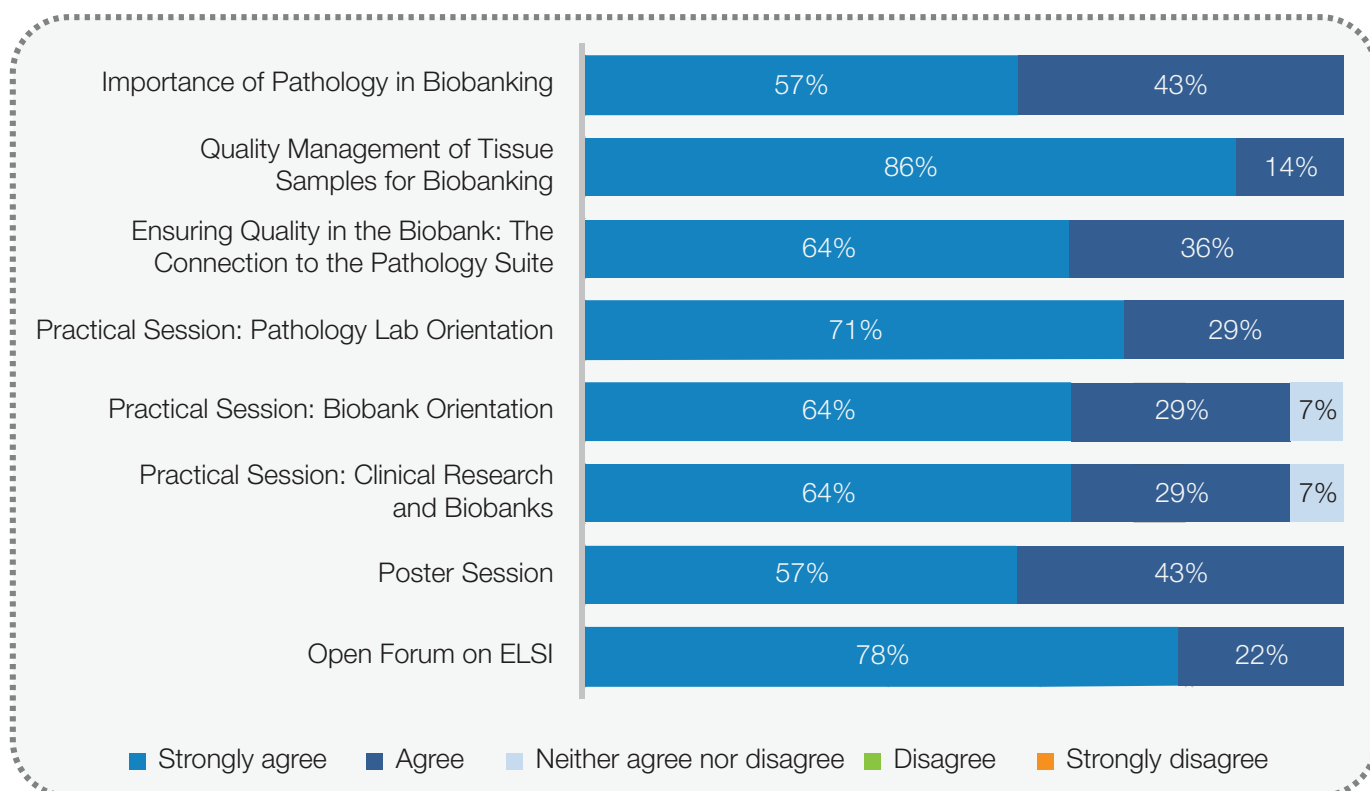
- Introduction to biobanking and the role of pathologists in biobanking
- Quality in relation to biobanking
- Development of standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- College of American Pathologists (CAP) accreditation
- Pre-analytical processing
- Grossing
- Ancillary techniques
- Molecular pathology
- International Classification of Diseases for Oncology (ICD-O) coding
- Standardizing data collection
- Integrating clinical data and a cancer registry with a biobank

New knowledge acquired on highly relevant topics

An online test was designed to assess participants' knowledge related to biobanking before and after the training. The results show a significant improvement between the pre-test and the post-test. Participants' feedback at the end of the training confirmed the high relevance of the course's main topics.



Improvement of participants' results between the pre-test and the post-test



Participants' responses to the post-training survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "The content of the session was relevant to my work"?

Next: concrete actions planned

At the end of the training, some concrete actions were already planned by participants to improve their biobanking activities.

These include:

- communicating better with surgeons;
- introducing a consent form;
- further developing national and regional biobanking;
- reorganizing biospecimen storage (despite a lack of freezers);
- introducing new software for sample data collection; and
- improving the quality of pathology materials collected.

**“We are
planning to start
a biobank, and therefore
I’m set to start on
the right foot!”**

– A training participant



The dynamism of the participants and faculty resulted in instructive discussions and exchanges beyond the training hours.



A special word of thanks to participants, trainers, partners, and organizers for such an instructive and dynamic learning experience!

Who Are We ?

BCNet is the Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) Biobank and Cohort Building Network, which was established in 2013 to provide a platform for collaboration between its members, partners, IARC, and the international community. BCNet aims to support biobanking and cohort-building activities and to develop sustainable infrastructures for the management of high-quality biological samples and data for research, using best practice principles and guidelines.

Upcoming BCNet Learning Events



BCNet Symposium: From Biobank Infrastructure to Research: How BCNet Member Biobanks are Addressing Public Health Concerns

Lyon, France | 27–28 November 2017

A symposium will be held on 27–28 November 2017 at IARC, in Lyon, France, in collaboration with the second B3Africa in-person training, which will take place just after the BCNet symposium, from 29 November to 1 December 2017. (B3Africa is a European Commission H2020-funded project that aims to support biobank-based research by creating a cooperation framework and technical platform; www.b3africa.org.)

The purpose of the symposium is to showcase the efforts of members in developing biobank-based collaborative research projects to address public health issues. The co-organization of

the two events will provide the opportunity for B3Africa partners to reach out to a wider range of LMIC institutions that might be interested in adopting and implementing the B3Africa platform – the eB3kit (see http://www.b3africa.org/?page_id=1494). In addition, BCNet members will benefit from a unique opportunity to learn about the platform and tools during the in-person training.

Symposium participants have been selected from among biobank staff and researchers from BCNet member institutions, through a competitive abstract submission process.



IARC will host the BCNet Symposium “From Biobank Infrastructure to Research: How BCNet Member Biobanks are Addressing Public Health Concerns” in Lyon on 27–28 November 2017.

BCNet Training for Pathologists and Pathology/Histology Technicians

Brazil | 2018

After the success of the Biobank Training for Pathologists and Pathology/Histology Technicians held in Cairo in 2017, another session is planned for 2018, in the Latin America region. Don't miss the next issue of the BCNetter for more information!

The BCNet Catalogue



Welcome to a New Catalogue Member: The National Liver Institute–Sustainable Science Institute Collaborative Research Center (NLISSICRC), Egypt



Sameera Ezzat
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“Our biobank welcomes research collaborations in the field of liver disease. We have a strong interest in epidemiology and molecular biology.”

After a successful pilot phase in 2016, the BCNet Catalogue recently opened applications to all BCNet members willing to share collections and sample data for future research collaborations.

The NLISSICRC jumped at the opportunity to present its biobank and interest in future research collaborations. With this new member, the BCNet Catalogue offers a window into **10 potential biobank collaborators from low- and middle-income countries** in Europe, Africa, and Asia.



The NLISSICRC biobank team

The NLISSICRC is a joint effort between the Egypt National Liver Institute and the Sustainable Sciences Institute, a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, USA.

The NLISSICRC biobank includes **25 074 samples** and supports research studies by:

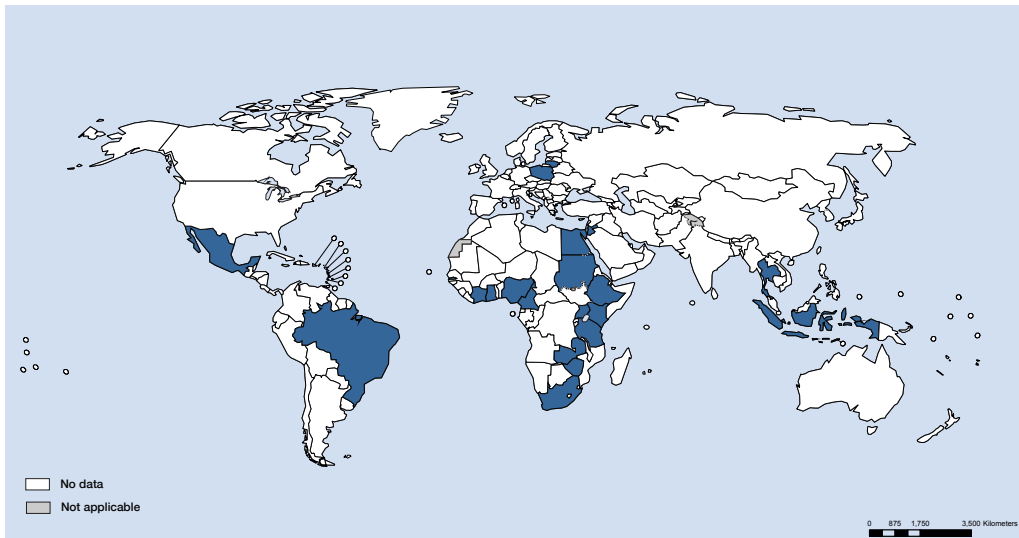
- managing an expanding one-time collection of peripheral blood from more than 3000 patients with **hepatitis C virus and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)**;
- collecting fresh frozen tissue for more than 100 subjects from surgically resected HCC;
- collecting blood samples from 200 subjects with **hepatitis C virus** who are being treated with new direct-acting antivirals with multiple follow-up times.

Revamped Catalogue Website Coming Soon

With lessons learned from the pilot phase, the BCNet team is now improving the Catalogue to enhance the user experience. The revamped website will include, among others, more user-friendly functionalities to upload data, secure protocols, and an easily searchable and attractive interface. More information to come in the next issue of the BCNetter!

BCNet members interested in learning more about the Catalogue may contact Dominique Meunier (meunierd@iarc.fr).

BCNet Members



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Data Source: IARC
Map Production: IARC
World Health Organization (WHO)

BRAZIL: Barretos Cancer Hospital; **CAMEROON:** Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Université de Yaoundé; Université des Montagnes; **CÔTE D'IVOIRE:** Institut Pasteur de Côte d'Ivoire; **EGYPT:** Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357, Faculty of Medicine Cairo University, Medical Research Institute Ain Shams University, Medical Research Institute Alexandria University, National Cancer Institute, National Liver Institute, South Egypt Cancer Institute Assiut University; **ETHIOPIA:** Jigjiga University; **GHANA:** Breast Care International, University of Health and Allied Sciences; **INDONESIA:** Faculty of Medicine Universitas Gadjah Mada; **JORDAN:** King Hussein Cancer Center Biobank; **KENYA:** Ampath Reference Laboratory; **LITHUANIA:** National Cancer Institute; **MEXICO:** Instituto Nacional de Cancerología; **NIGERIA:** College of Medicine University of Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex; **POLAND:** Biobank Lab Department of Molecular Biophysics University of Lodz, Wrocław Research Centre EIT+ Biobank; **SOUTH AFRICA:** National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), NHLS/Stellenbosch University Biobank; **SUDAN:** Radio-Isotope Centre Khartoum; **THAILAND:** National Cancer Institute; **THE GAMBIA:** Medical Research Council (MRC) The Gambia Unit, MRC International Nutrition Group; **UGANDA:** Makerere University College of Health Sciences; **UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA:** Kilimanjaro Clinical Research Institute; **ZAMBIA:** Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia; **ZIMBABWE:** African Institute of Biomedical Science & Technology; University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences.

BCNet Partners



Centre of Genomics and Policy
Centre de génomique et politiques

LMIC



BCNET
Bioscience And Clinical e-Infrastructure Network

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