

BCNetter

Issue No. 8, February 2019



Message from Zisis Kozlakidis

By now many of you will know that I took on the role of BCNet Coordinator in June of last year. I am greatly honoured to be one of your colleagues, and am pleased for this opportunity to bring you up to date on BCNet activities.

Biobanking is a growing field with a host of research, educational, ethical, innovation, and managerial issues that are being addressed through the BCNet. Our aim is to promote consistent high quality education and standards; ethical principles and innovation in biospecimen banking by uniting the LMIC biobanking community in the largest LMIC forum.

In the last days of 2018 BCNet renewed its collaboration activities with ISBER, the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories. This means that BCNet members will have ongoing, cost-free access to ISBER resources. Additionally this will strengthen the presence of LMIC biobanking voices within the international community as we expect BCNet to be represented in future biobanking meetings. More details are in the article

And there is more in store! BCNet continues to hold workshops, and training opportunities. Two were held in Kenya and Egypt as you can read in this BCNetter. Planning is well underway for BCNet's presence in further activities in South America and other African member institutions.

Apart from planning BCNet meetings, we are also very busy with initiatives that we believe will enhance quality and improve standards in biobanking. For example, preparations are well underway to reach out to our partners and allied societies, which we think have many goals in common with BCNet and can incorporate the LMIC challenges and opportunities in their plans.

BCNet's goal is to have an inclusive approach in enacting its plans and fulfilling its mission and vision. This can only be achieved by the active participation of members and the mapping of member needs. Our lines of communication will remain open at all times, and that can only strengthen our mission.

Zisis Kozlakidis

BCNet Coordinator

What's On ?



March

[International Biobanking Conference](#) Doha, Qatar

25th March 2019

April

[6th World Congress on Human Genetics and Genetic Diseases](#), Abu Dhabi, UAE

8th April 2019

May

[ISBER 2019](#), Shanghai, May 7-10 2019

IARC and Ampath Oncology Institute organize Biobank Training Workshop in Kenya



From 14 – 15 January 2019, Zisis Kozlakidis and Elodie Caboux provided in-depth training in biobanking to 15 participants at the Ampath Oncology Institute, Eldoret.

Report by Bonnie Oduor, Coordinator, Ampath Oncology Biobanking Program

The Ampath Oncology Institute hosted a two-day biobanking training workshop, from 14-15 January, conducted by Dr Zisis Kozlakidis and Dr Elodie Caboux from IARC, at the Telemedicine Conference facility, Chandaria Cancer & Chronic Diseases Center, Eldoret. The training was organised under the Oncology Program with the overarching goal of providing a general overview of the key issues in establishing, maintaining and accessing a biobank as well as strengthening technical capacity for increased consideration and use of human tissue repositories/ biorepositories. This training brought together high-level personnel including Principal Investigators, Program Managers, Biobank Managers, Laboratory Technicians, Physicians, Pathologists, Immunologists, among others.

After the training, the participants were evaluated using questionnaires to give their general opinion, rating the effectiveness and usefulness of the training.

The overall goal in gathering these data was to evaluate whether the training optimized learning for work for biobank staff and other professionals that are associated with biobank operations.

Conclusion

These data suggest respondents are excited and willing to learn more about biobanking. Nonetheless, there are limited biobanking training and networking opportunities available for these individuals especially in Sub-Saharan Africa but if given a chance, they would seek to learn more about biobanking.

However, Ampath Oncology Institute, through such partnerships and training initiatives with IARC/WHO and other willing organizations intends to change the cancer care landscape by building capacity, increasing research and improving care. The programme for the 2-day training included modules on biobank infrastructure, the collection of samples, quality and data management, ELSI, and sustainability.

For more information, contact [Bonnie Oduor](#).



Biobank Training in Eldoret, Kenya. From Left: Mr Bonnie Oduor, Mr Titus Kipkemboi Maina, Mr Lawrence Atundo, Dr Zisis Kozlakidis, Dr Elodie Caboux, Dr Kirtika Patel, Mr Samson Boyo, Dr Kiprotich Chelimo, Dr David Muyodi, Dr Ibrahim Daud, Prof Fredrick Chite, Ms Emily Koech, Dr Mutambuki Kimondo, Ms Rachel Koris, Ms Linda Jaika, Ms Sarah Awino Ballah, Ms Alice Mudogo.

Call for interest.....



BAM is a new project from VizzDAT with roots at Karolinska Institutet aimed for LMIC but we need biobanks to test it.

BAM is a user friendly mobile application for logging and storing biological samples, both liquid and tissue. It is available as a mobile app, compatible with all devices, as well as a web-based desktop program.

BAM grew out of a project headed up by Prof Jan-Eric Litton, Karolinska Institute, to help Swedish researchers administrate complex biobank projects.

BAM's main features include:

- biobanks and research groups that handle biological samples can log and store information about samples, projects, freezer positions, storage structures, etc
- Phone camera reads barcodes (1D and 2D)
- Available as a desktop program or mobile app compatible with Android, iOS, Windows.
- Keystroke and user behavior logging
- GPS information can be added upon request, to log the exact position of the mobile device when working with BAM
- flexible and scalable data storage, secure login with one or two factor authentication as well as encryption of all data traffic
- Ability to integrate BAM with other solutions for data collection, storing and analysis (including VizzDAT's self-developed visualization tool VIZ for superior overview)

- VizzDAT conforms to the European Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Can be 100% customized for each biobank/research group upon request with transparent methods for developing and customization together with client
- Currently available in English, Swedish, German, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian.
- Delivered by a company with relevant background from Karolinska Institute, one of the world's leading medical universities
- BAM will come in three versions: BAM Light, BAM Standard and BAM Custom.

If you are interested in testing BAM, please contact Sally Moldan at bcnet@iarc.fr

More articles



[Stellenbosch University to launch research institute ...](#)

[GDPR in biobanking for precision medicine research: The challenges](#)

[ISBER and the BCNet; A strengthened Partnership](#)

Who Are We?

BCNet is the Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) 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.

11th BGICC Conference in Cairo Egypt



BGICC conference in Cairo, Egypt from 17 to 18 January, 2019

Report by Dr Amany Maher, MASRI Biobank



Standing from left: Dr Ahmed Samir, NCI Biobank; Dr Safa Mukhtar, Assuit Cancer Institute Biobank; Dr Sally Wahied, Luxor Biobank; Dr Fayek Elkhwsy, Alexandria Medical Research Institute; Dr Doaa Mohamed, Assuit Cancer Institute; Dr Merhan Fouda, NCI Biobank

Seated from left, Dr Elodie Caboux, IARC; Dr Amany Maher, MASRI Biobank

The Faculty of Medicine Ain Shams Research Institute (MASRI) and Breast Gynaecological International Cancer Society Board, hosted the 1st International Egyptian Biobank Conference in conjunction with the 11th Breast, Gynaecological and immuno-oncology International Cancer Conference (BGICC) on 18-19 January 2019 in Cairo, Egypt.

The conference brought together a global network of professionals to foster innovation resulting in the betterment of biobanking and medical research.

IARC/BCNet was invited to share information and experience on Biobanking in Cancer Research and Quality management in Biobanking at the BGICC conference and to participate in a workshop "Toward Egyptian Networking" on 20th January at The Faculty of Medicine Ain Shams Research Institute (MASRI).

Also, ISBER was represented by one of their communication committee members, Dr Dan Guo, who shared her background in Biobanking standard procedures and Chinese networks as a model. This year's conference was a great success, gathering all Egyptian expertise and biobankers and putting us on the way to develop our National Egyptian Network.

Contact: [Dr Amany Maher](#) for more information.



From left: Dr Amany Maher, MASRI Biobank, Dr Elodie Caboux, IARC; Dr Rania Labib, 57357 Children's Cancer Hospital; Dr Dan Guo, Peking Union Medical College Hospital Biobank

BCNet member Dr Rania Labib is one of the 2019 African Postdoc Training Initiative Fellows



A new National Institutes of Health (NIH) fellowship program managed by the Fogarty International Center (FIC) aims to prepare future generations of African researchers while establishing ongoing scientific partnerships between NIH labs and African investigators and institutions. The African Postdoctoral Training Initiative (APTI) is a collaboration of the NIH, the African Academy of Sciences and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. During the four-year fellowships, NIH will provide two years of training with principal investigators who share the fellows' research interests. The African scientists will then return to their home institutions and receive two years of support to help them continue their research and establish themselves as independent investigators.



Dr Rania Labib, from the 57357 Children's Cancer Hospital in Cairo, Egypt will be hosted by NCI. Dr Labib's research area is child health.

The call for proposals for this exciting new fellowship was sent out by email in FIC's bi-weekly funding opportunities electronic newsletter. Marianne Henderson, from the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Center for Global Health and founding partner of IARC's Biobanking and Cohort Building Network (BCNet), immediately sent the announcement to IARC to share with our BCNet members. Sally Moldan shared the announcement and the most exciting event happened!

It is such an opportunity to come full circle between the BCNet Partners and members, supporting one of the BCNet goals of strengthening the competitiveness of LMIC biobanks in applying for international funding. <http://bcnet.iarc.fr>

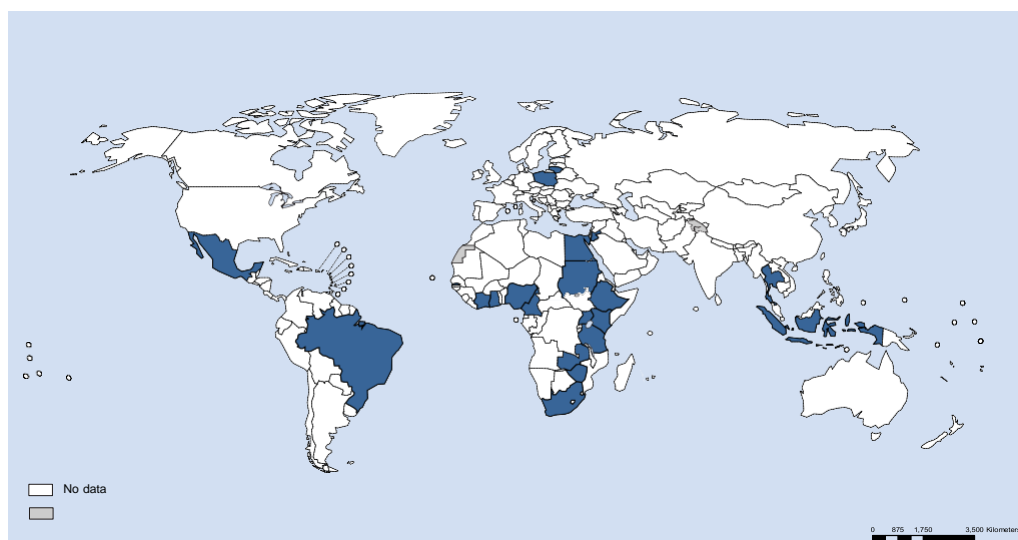
One of our own, BCNet members, **Dr. Rania Labib**, of the Children's Cancer Hospital in Cairo, Egypt, saw the announcement and applied. We are happy to report that Dr. Labib was awarded one of the first 10 awards in the initial call. Dr. Labib is now in the US, at the NCI working on pediatric cancer. "I am so excited for Rania to be here at my home institute, working in cutting edge pediatric cancer research" said Marianne Henderson. "I look forward to discussing her project and wish her the best in her research success!"

The ten fellows for 2019 come from Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Nigeria. More information and details of the funded fellows as well as future opportunities for fellowships are available on the APTI website [African Postdoctoral Training Initiative \(APTI\)](#)

For more on the NCI Center for Global Health, <https://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/organization/cgh>

To sign up for the FIC NIH Funding Opportunities electronic newsletter, <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNIHFIC/s/ubscriber/new>

BCNet Members



World Health Organization

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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



Karolinska Institutet



Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas



Centre of Genomics and Policy
Centre de génomique et politiques

LMIC



BCNET
BIOBANK AND COHORTS NETWORK FOR TROPICAL COUNTRIES

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