

# BCNetter

Issue No. 12, June 2020



*A snapshot of our BCNet Check-In Meeting held on Zoom, on May 08, 2020*

Dear BCNet Members,

What a difference three months make!

In France, and Europe as a whole, we are coming slowly into the 'new normal' after a 12-week period of confinement, during which most aspects of our work were affected in an unprecedented manner. These included laboratory work, the collection and receipt of biological samples for a number of studies across the world, as well as the cancellation of major events and meetings.

The [ISBER](#) 2020 Annual meeting in Anaheim was cancelled, and instead a number of webinars are planned to take place throughout the year. The same has been true for future meetings too, such as the [European Biobank Week](#) (will be moving to a virtual meeting format) as well as the [African Society for Laboratory Medicine \(ASLM\)](#) moving onto a new date a year later, in 2021.

The last few months have witnessed a number of challenges, most of which still ongoing. These highlight the need for taking wider, collective action so that our efforts can be impactful. The existence of strong networks provides the cornerstone for such collective activities, as well as the opportunity to share experiences and expertise. The ability to share information across our network gives us strength and a continued empowerment.

We are grateful for your very active participation to the BCNet check-in meeting in May. It is clear that we have all been affected, in many different ways by the pandemic. Our continuing communication remains key to overcome the challenges ahead of us. We will be circulating over the next few weeks a short survey to re-assess the needs and priorities for the BCNet working groups in light of the global developments.

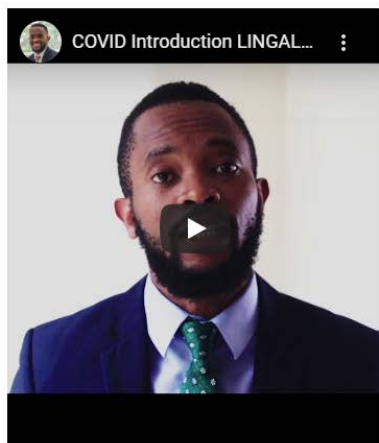
In this BCNetter you will read about multilingual COVID-19 videos; the GHTAs; the increasing utility of the IARC online Learning Platform; as well as the most up to date developments by the BMMRI.nl colleagues on sustainable biobanking. New papers and important news are also highlighted.

We are grateful for all of our members' contributions and keen to highlight much needed success stories where possible.

We will continue steadfast through these unpredictable times, with the communication lines always open while pursuing new activities for the benefit of our network. We look forward to the continued cooperation of the members and even more successful initiatives in the coming weeks and months.

Zisis Kozlakidis  
**BCNet Coordinator**

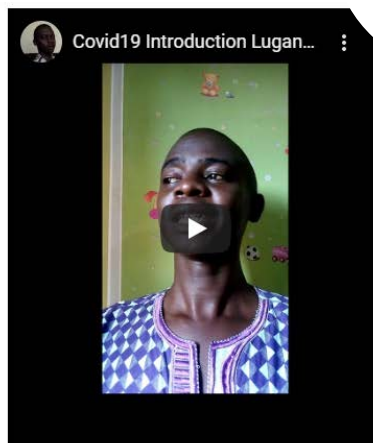
# Multilingual COVID-19 Information Videos



Lingala [DR Congo]



Swahili [Kenya]



Luganda [Uganda]

There is a lot of information circulating about COVID-19 – some more reliable than other. For many individuals, it is stressful to sort through differing messages – often in languages that are not their mother tongue.

Afric ArXiv, the community-led digital archive for African research communication, proposes to address this with short, consistent messages provided in as many regional/local languages as possible. It is an open access resource, which uses a standardized script which volunteers translate into relevant languages, record a video of themselves reading the message and post it to the site (using a creative commons license).

The project began with African languages but are looking to expand the resource to all global languages, so if you think you might be able to contribute, or know someone who could contribute a language not yet covered on the website, there are instructions on how to create and add a video in your preferred language or languages.

Please do feel free to share as much as possible, this is intended to be a global open access resource.

➤ [Link here.](#)

## What's On?



The [International Cancer Institute \(ICI\)](#), Eldoret, Kenya, has developed virtual courses in May/June supporting African professionals for preceptorships. Contact: Dr. Chizi Kiti, ICI Education and Training Head, at [ckiti@intercancer.com](mailto:ckiti@intercancer.com)

The University of Graz, Germany, is proposing a course entitled "[Master of Science Biobanking](#)".

The H3Africa Administrative Coordinating Centre (H3ACC) is pleased to release the [H3Africa Promotional Video](#)

Grant opportunity: [Strengthening Institutional Capacity to Conduct Global Cancer Research in LMICs](#)

Application deadline: 24 July 2020

# Mechanobiology – one step closer to in vivo conditions



Mechanical stress has a significant effect on the microbiological behaviour of individual cells: it affects e.g. blood pressure control ([Wang et al. 2016](#)) or pathway regulation in endothelial cells ([He et al. 2020](#)). Recent findings on the effects of COVID-19 on endothelial cells ([Varga et al. 2020](#)) make researching the impact of mechanical stress a pressing need.

In general, experiments using flow to generate shear stress on cells were seen as too complex and too time-consuming to set up – a situation we could not accept. Together with researchers at the University of Zurich, Vitroscope developed an integrated flow chamber system for live cell microscopy. It allows continuous live-cell observation under physiological levels of flow-induced shear stress – one step closer to in vivo conditions.

Vitroscope puts a strong focus on making work in the laboratory as efficient and easy as possible so that every researcher can enter the field of mechanobiology. Their published solution ([Kriesi et al. 2019](#)) requires no special tools, no special adapters and fits right onto standard microscope stages. Tested over hundreds of hours – biocompatible – ready for discoveries. Do you think this would help your research efforts? And are highly integrated solutions easier adapted in low- and middle income research settings? Let Vitroscope know [here](#)! And please reach out for future collaborations:

[contact@vitroscope.no](mailto:contact@vitroscope.no) / Website: [vitroscope.no](http://vitroscope.no)

## Recent publications from our Members



Dr Elodie Caboux contributed as co-author:

[Extending the Minimum Information About Biobank Data Sharing Terminology to Describe Samples, Sample Donors, and Events](#)

From some of our colleagues in the Philippines:  
[A Pilot Cancer-Phenome Biobanking System in a Low-Resource Southeast Asian Setting: The Philippine General Hospital Biobank Experience](#)

From our colleagues in Morocco:  
[Patients' Knowledge and Attitude Toward Biobanks in Eastern Morocco](#)

From Prof. Ma'n H. Zawati:  
[Biobanking for Genomic and Personalized Health Research: Participant Perceptions and Preferences](#)

Also:  
[The Experts Speak on Biobank Education](#)

[Editorial: Clinical Microbiology in Low Resource Settings](#)

# Apply for the Global Health Travel Awards



**eSymposia**  
**Myeloid Cells and Innate Immunity in Solid Tumors**  
September 21-23, 2020\*  
*\*Program is in development and subject to change*

**SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZERS:**  
Judith A. Varner, Lisa M. Coussens and Dmitry I. Gabrilovich

Global Health Travel Awards (GHTAs) are open to students, fellows, career scientists and clinicians from LMICs, and aims at covering travel fees to access Keystone Symposia meetings. The program aims to provide researchers from diverse backgrounds and limited resource settings with the opportunities afforded by attending large scientific conferences, including:

- Insights into the latest scientific, technological and clinical advances and innovative new directions.
- Sharing their work with global research leaders.
- Networking and career development opportunities.
- Educational training on the state and direction of the field.
- Pre-Meeting Workshop training to prepare GHTA winners for the conference experience.

The awards cover conference-related expenses, including: meeting registration, lodging, airfare and ground transportation. The amounts of the awards vary, depending on where awardees are coming from and the extent of their need.

Note: Some meetings have been converted to virtual meetings for which GHTAs will only cover registration costs.

Examples of symposia organised by Keystone Symposia:

- August 17 - 19, 2020: Advances in Cancer Immunotherapy
- September 20 - 23, 2020: Proteomics in Cell Biology and Disease
- September 20 - 24, 2020: Genomic Stability and DNA Repair
- September 20 - 24, 2020: Myeloid Cells and Innate Immunity in Solid Tumors
- October 1 - 4, 2020: RNA Editing and Modifications: From Biology to Therapy
- October 4 - 7, 2020: Tissue Plasticity: Preservation and Alteration of Cellular Identity
- October 4 - 8, 2020: Autophagy: Mechanisms and Disease
- October 21 - 24, 2020: Optimizing Nutrition for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
- November 30, 2020 - December 3, 2020: A Gut-Systemic Perspective for Metabolic Disease

Links:

[Full list of symposia](#)

[More info on the travel awards](#)



Sustainability remains a continuous challenge for many biobanks and effective strategies are hard to come by. BBMRI.nl, the Netherlands entity of the Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure, has published [recommendations, good practices, and background knowledge](#) for improving biobank sustainability. These will soon be available on the International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC) Biobanking Learning Platform.

Follow up the platform for updates [here!](#)

Since the beginning of the year, the IARC Biobank Learning platform has attracted 325 visitors with a total of 9,752 hits.

The most popular resources are:

- Lecture: "Introduction to Biobanking" Part 1 & 2
- Lecture: "Sustaining Biobanks, Insights from Infrastructure Planning across the World"
- Self-paced: "Get Started with the eB3Kit"
- Video Tutorial: "Using your Baobab LIMS"
- Webinar: "Material Transfer Agreement"

Want to know more? Access the Learning Platform [here](#)

Please note that you can subscribe to the website RSS Feeds at the bottom of the website main page and receive any update in your mailbox, as they are published.

The b3Africa project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 654404.

Contact Us

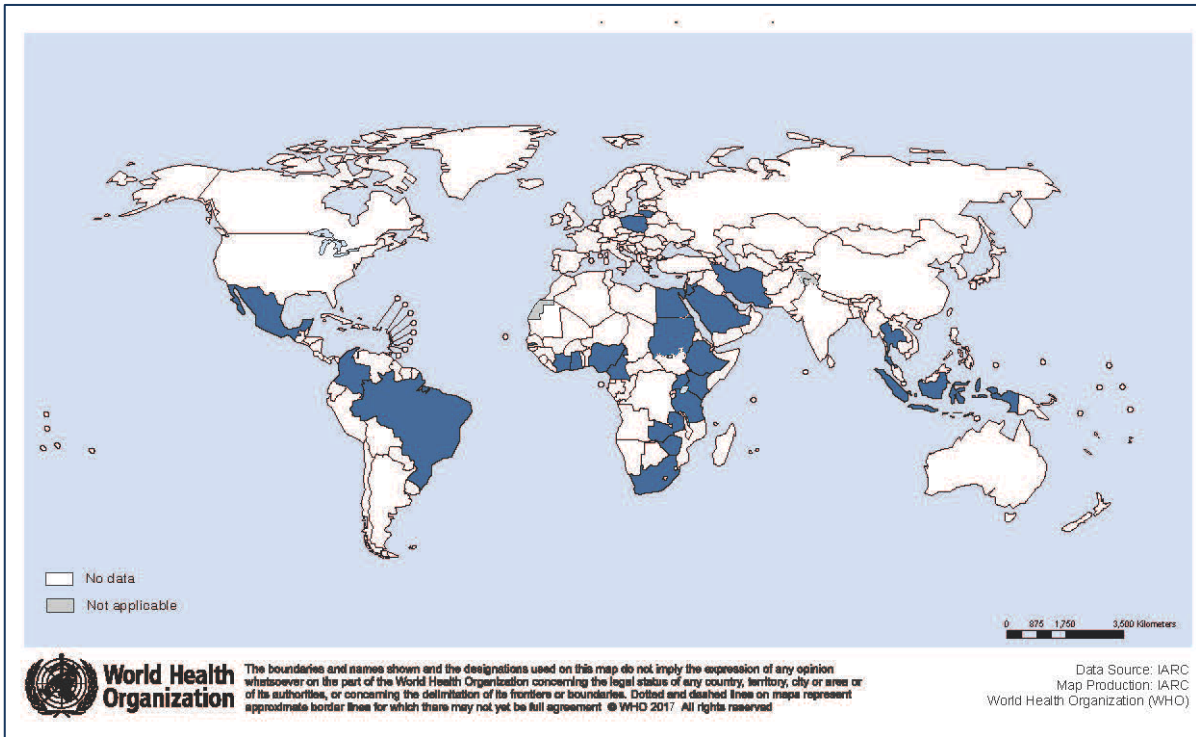
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## Who Are We?

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.

# BCNet Members



**BRAZIL:** Barretos Cancer Hospital; **CAMEROON:** Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, Université de Yaoundé; Université des Montagnes; **COLOMBIA:** Clinica de la Costa Ltda; **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; **IRAN:** Golestan Cancer Biobank; **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



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