

# BCNetter

Issue No. 19, October 2022



Dear **BCNet Members**,

This issue comes during a period of transition, reflecting the many changes taking place. Globally, the fields of biomedical research and healthcare are settling into a transition period from the pandemic acute emergency towards a new normal of living with the virus. It is evident that the pandemic has been a universal catalyst for innovative thinking. There have been innovative approaches in biobanking, incorporating remote monitoring of facilities, new versions of safety tubes for the long storage of samples, and many other technical components that are being exhibited by the industry at conferences.

IARC is changing its home, from the old Tower building to the Nouveau Centre NC), still within the city of Lyon. In the NC (top photo), an entire, purpose-built floor is dedicated to biobanking activities for the Agency, and this will be its new home for the next two decades at least. Change too at the helm of the European, Middle Eastern & African Society for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB; <https://www.esbb.org/>), with Prof. Karine Sargsyan being the new president, following a very successful presidency by Dr Dominik Lermen (photo right). Prof. Sargsyan is a familiar face in the field of biobanking as she leads the biobank at the Medical University of Graz and has been instrumental in developing one of the first international education courses (MSc) in biobanking. Prof. Sargsyan is a close collaborator of BCNet, in recent years through the EU-funded twinning project ARICE (<https://www.arice.am/>), where LMIC biobanking expertise has been successfully transferred and

integrated within Armenian biomedical research infrastructures.

It is anticipated that all these changes will further energize the development of the biobanking field in LMICs and the visibility and utility of BCNet. However, change is not uniform, nor experienced in the same manner. Specifically, during such transition times, drivers for change range from the introduction of new technologies to the development of new operating frameworks for existing capacities, anchored in a context-dependent manner. Thus, the emerging innovation is anticipated to be varied and often reflecting regionally-defined, fragmented sets of requirements. To capture this, the journal [Biopreservation and Biobanking](#) has created a new section entitled “emerging markets and technologies”, and the entire October 2022 issue is dedicated on this topic.

The current issue reflects the wide breadth of developments, publications and announcements that BCNet members may find interesting. A special mention is made to Prof. Sameera Ezzat with the kind input of Dr Ahmed Samir on the sudden loss of a biobanking leader in Egypt. The last publication of Prof. Ezzat was on an LMIC-based topic and her words still resonate with the colleagues and the BCNet. “Local contexts and collaborations with existing infrastructures and/or surveillance networks in LMICs are likely to characterize the next period of growth for biobanking”.

(From: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bsheal.2022.07.002>)

Zisis Kozlakidis and Tracy Wootton

**BCNet Coordinators**





**Prof. Dr Sameera Ezzat Abou El Kheir, M.D., PhD.**

Dr Sameera Ezzat was born on March 16, 1972. She graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University, Egypt in 1995, and finished her MSc in 2002 and her PhD in 2006. She then received post-doctoral training at Johns Hopkins University in the fields of Epidemiology, Molecular Biology, and Biostatistics.

Dr Ezzat was a cancer epidemiologist with broad training and experience in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, with a special focus on the roles of genetic and environmental risk factors in human cancers. She received training in the analysis of Genome-wide Association Studies (GWAS) and was the PI of several projects that were funded by national and international agencies, such as US-NIH, SIDA, WHO, the National Cancer Institute, University of Kuopio, and others. She had more than one hundred publications in the fields of Epidemiology of cancer as well as gene-environment interactions and their role in the development of cancer. In recognition of her work and activities, she received many awards such as Menoufia University Recognition Award (2011) and the National Motivation Award for Medical Sciences (2010).

Dr Sameera had extensive experience in research administration in her role as a Director of the Research Department at the Children's Cancer Hospital, Egypt from 2008 to 2014 and as Chair of the Public Health department at the National Liver Institute, Menoufia University from 2016 to 2019.

She worked as a Director of the National Liver Institute-Sustainable Sciences Institute (NLISSI) Collaborative Research Center (CRC).

She was promoted to Vice Dean at the National Liver Institute from 2017 to 2019, where she led many outreach programs at Menoufia Governorate. She was one of the leading biobankers in Egypt, where she participated in the establishment of three biobanks in different regions of the country, and was leading the research department and biobank of Shefa Al-Orman oncology hospital in Upper Egypt until she passed away.

**Recent publications:**

[Ezzat S, et al. Biobanking in LMIC settings for infectious diseases: Challenges and enablers. Biosafety and Health. 4 \(5\), 290-292.](#)

[Schraw JM, et al. Infant feeding practices and childhood acute leukemia: Findings from the Childhood Cancer & Leukemia International Consortium. International Journal of Cancer. 151 \(7\), 1013-1023.](#)

[Blach S, et al. Global change in hepatitis C virus prevalence and cascade of care between 2015 and 2020: A modelling study. The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology. 7 \(5\), 396-415.](#)

[El Kassas M, et al. Effect of disease stage and treatment outcomes on the dynamics of liver functions during and after treatment of hepatitis C with directly acting antivirals. European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology. 33 \(1S\), e302-e307.](#)

[Polaris Observatory Collaborators, H Razavi, et al. The case for simplifying and using absolute targets for viral hepatitis elimination goals. Journal of viral hepatitis. 28 \(1\), 12-19.](#)

## Meetings and conferences



### JOIN US AT THE ISBER 2023 ANNUAL MEETING!

ISBER is the only global biobanking organization that creates opportunities for networking, education, and innovation.

The ISBER Annual Meeting has been the premier annual event in biobanking for over 20 years, bringing together biobankers from six continents to learn, discuss, and collaborate on important topics and emerging issues.

Our 2023 event will be a hybrid meeting giving our international delegates the option to attend in-person in Seattle, USA from May 3–6 or virtually (virtual dates TBD).

Our international program planning task force, led by Dayong Gao (USA), Anusha Hettiaratchi (Australia), and Birendra Kumar Yadav (India), are developing a program of top speakers in the biobanking field whose sessions will appeal to biobankers from all repository types and levels of experience to learn, discuss. The goal of the conference is to share knowledge that will bridge biobanking boundaries, improve diversity of samples, and foster collaboration. We will share success stories and practical solutions that delegates can implement in their own biobanks.

[Click here](#) for the Sponsorship Brochure.



### Europe Biobank Week 2022 Roadshow, Rome. 'Paediatric Biobanking and Minor Engagement'.

The second stop of [Europe Biobank Week Roadshow](#) was held in Rome on October 13-14, 2022. The focus was on paediatrics and ELSI challenges in biobanking with children and was ably held at the Ospedale Pediatrico Bambino Gesù.

Paediatric (research) biobanking is a European priority and the roadshow promoted practical solutions, addressing challenges of biobanking with children (earlier, over time, and following-up), such as: how empowering new generations makes better research and a better research experience? Which tools to use to inform and increase the minor's understanding? By whom is the child's capacity (to understand, to assent) assessed? How to engage minors and their parents (guardians) over time and recognize them as active research participants?





The second **Advancing Healthcare Innovation Summit (AHIS 2022)**, has successfully concluded on November 11, 2022, in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. This is a conference with a free online registration for participants, dedicated to showcasing innovations in healthcare and healthcare research. The abstracts of the conference are indexed in the journal '[Innovations in Digital Health, Diagnostics and Biomarkers](#)'. The latter journal continues to invite submissions by LMIC colleagues, and publication of such manuscripts will be free of charge for the first months of 2023.

## Recent publications from our Members



[Abdelhafiz AS, Ahram M, Ibrahim ME, Elgamri A, Gamel E, Labib R and Silverman H. Biobanks in the low- and middle-income countries of the Arab Middle East region: challenges, ethical issues, and governance arrangements—a qualitative study involving biobank managers.](#)

[Abdelhafiz AS, Ali A, Kamel MM, Ahmed EH, Sayed DM and Bakry RM. Sinopharm's BBIBP-CorV Vaccine and ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 Vaccine Are Associated with a Comparable Immune Response against SARS-CoV-2.](#)

[Shirakashi R, Kozlakidis Z, Yadav BK, Ng W, Fachiroh J, Vu H, Tsuruyama T, Furuta K. Decarbonization in Biobanking: A Potential New Scientific Area. \*Biopreservation and Biobanking\*. 2022 Oct 1;20\(5\):446-50.](#)

[Gupta RK, Kozlakidis Z. Emerging Markets and Technologies: A Special Issue and a New Section for Biopreservation and Biobanking. \*Biopreservation and Biobanking\*. 2022 Oct 1;20\(5\):415-6.](#)

[Medina P, Kealy J, Kozlakidis Z. Integrating research infrastructures into infectious diseases surveillance operations: focus on biobanks. \*Biosafety and Health\*. 2022 Oct 19.](#)

[Stejskal L, Kalemra MD, Lewis CB, Palor M, Walker L, Daviter T, Lees WD, Moss DS, Kremyda-Vlachou M, Kozlakidis Z, Gallo G. An entropic safety catch controls hepatitis C virus entry and antibody resistance. \*Elife\*. 2022 Jul 7;11:e71854.](#)

[Simeon-Dubach D, Kozlakidis Z. How to Mitigate Unintentional Misconduct with Samples and Data in Biorepositories. \*Integrity of Scientific Research 2022\* \(pp. 469-476\). Springer, Cham.](#)

[Matera-Witkiewicz A, Zagorska K, Kozlakidis Z, Glenska-Olender J. Creation of National Guides in the Frame of International Standards and Best Practices in Biobanking: "Quality Standards for Polish Biobanks Handbook". \*Biopreservation and Biobanking\*. 2022 Mar 30.](#)

[Matharoo-Ball B, Diop M, Kozlakidis Z. Harmonizing the COVID-19 sample biobanks: Barriers and opportunities for standards, best practices and networks. \*Biosafety and Health\*. 2022 Aug 25;4\(04\):280-2.](#)

[Aisyah DN, Manikam L, Kiasatina T, Naman M, Adisasmito W, Kozlakidis Z. The Use of Health Compliance Monitoring System during COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia: An Evaluation Study. \*JMIR Public Health and Surveillance\*. 2022 Oct 9.](#)

[Mitchell C, Gramatiuk S, Sarkisian T, Kozlakidis Z, Sargsyan K. Biobanking IT Systems, Database Structure and Web Applications. \*Biobanks in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Relevance, Setup and Management 2022\* \(pp. 81-89\). Springer, Cham.](#)

[Osorio C, Sfera A, Anton JJ, Thomas KG, Andronescu CV, Li E, Yahia RW, Avalos AG, Kozlakidis Z. Virus-Induced membrane fusion in neurodegenerative disorders. \*Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology\*. 2022:319.](#)



### ISBER virtual training opportunities:

#### ➤ Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRS)

ISBER and ASCP BOC are pleased to announce the Qualification in Repository Science (QBRS) for biobankers.

Upon meeting specific educational and experience requirements for the qualification, candidates will be eligible to complete an online examination and, if successful, gain recognition for their skills and competencies as biobankers. This new qualification will further advance the field of biorepository science! Biobanks are vital to medical research and precision medicine and require qualified professionals to obtain high quality results that will be useful in advancing biomedicine.

For more information: [Click here](#)

#### ➤ Essentials of Biobanking Course

Learn about key elements involved in planning, establishing, maintaining and accessing a successful biobank! This on-line, self-paced course uses the latest edition of the ISBER Best Practices to serve as the tenets for the curriculum while references to the new ISO 20387:2018 standard have been incorporated.

The Essentials of Biobanking course is applicable to all biobanking.

This course has received input from international biobanking experts and endorsement from ISBER. The estimated time to complete this course is 7–11 hours.

For more information: [Click here](#)



#### ➤ BBMRI.QM Academy educational webinars

The pan-European Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI-ERIC) is committed to the further education of the biobanking community and thus proud to present through the BBMRI.QM Academy educational webinars – both live and on-demand – the latest developments in biobanking and biomolecular resources. These e-learning options aim at improving clinical, medical and scientific skills and answering questions on biobanking and biomolecular resources, from basic to advanced.

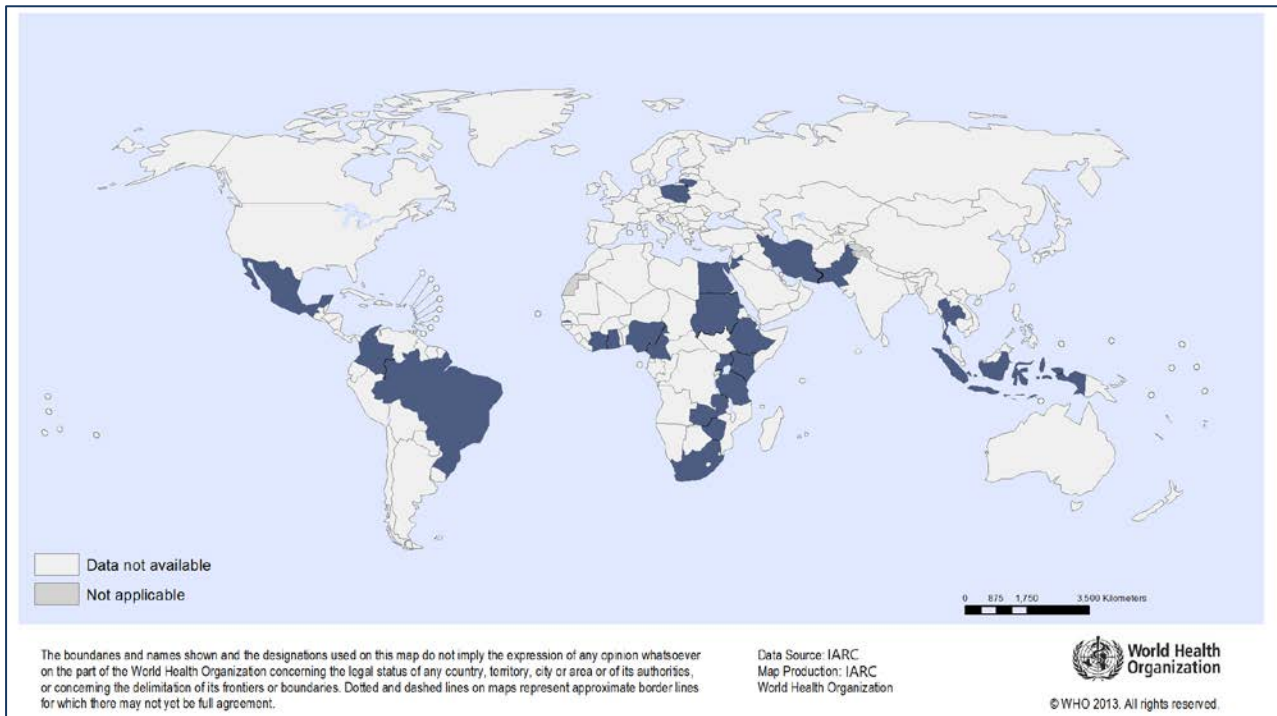
BBMRI.QM Academy offers a selection of interactive, web-based, e-learning methods designed by key experts. E-learning, either via live educational webinars or via webinars which can be watched on demand, and often carries continuing medical education (CME) and continuing professional development (CPD) credits.

For more information: [Click here](#)



New research by the **London School of Health and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)**. A long-term IARC collaborator, ISBER Science Policy member and WHO expert ([Ms Jennifer Kealy](#)) is currently investigating the governance frameworks for paediatric biobanking in LMICs, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, BCNet members will be asked by email to provide any possible details that can be used as the basis for a comparative study. Any information provided will be treated as confidential and the participation is anonymised. However, being able to collect the information would be critical in providing future recommendations for the development of paediatric biobanking in LMICs.

# BCNet Members



**BRAZIL:** Banco de Células do Rio de Janeiro; Barretos Cancer Hospital; Instituto do Câncer do Estado de São Paulo/Fundação Faculdade de Medicina **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:** Aswan University; Children's Cancer Hospital Egypt – 57357; Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University; Integrated Biobank of Mansoura, School of Medicine, Mansoura University; Medical Research Institute, Ain Shams University; Medical Research Institute, Alexandria University; National Cancer Institute; National Liver Institute; Shifaa Al Orman Hospital, Luxor; 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; Maseno University; **LITHUANIA:** National Cancer Institute; **MEXICO:** Instituto Nacional de Cancerologia; **NIGERIA:** College of Medicine, University of Ibadan; Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital; Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex; **PAKISTAN:** Liaquat University of Medical Health and Sciences; Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC); **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:** Institute of Endemic Diseases (IEND), University of Khartoum; 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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