

BCNetter

Issue No. 22, October 2023



Dear **BCNet Members**,

It is with great pleasure that we can meet colleagues and friends from across the world once more. We are learning about their struggles, achievements, and in many cases (as in IARC) the renewal of their facilities. In the last few months, scientific meetings have started being face-to-face again, without losing the virtual presence opportunities, a capacity that was well-conquered during the pandemic. Therefore, this BCNetter provides a summary of the most recent such meetings, as well as information on upcoming conferences globally, revolving around biobanking and population cohorts.

While it has been clear that these meetings have resumed for good, for many their relative frequency, sustainability, and location on the annual calendar of events remain uncertain, to be defined by their audiences and/or the professional societies that organize them. Another interesting element is the evident need for more regional meetings, whether supported by national associations, in the form of day-long events or 2-day long roadshows. They also demonstrate the acute need for communication, re-establishing collaborations and identifying new potential opportunities in the horizon.

Speaking of opportunities, the canSERV call is the latest such opportunity. Provided for free by the European Union for well-specified scientific questions, researchers from across the world can request the services of one or more European Research Infrastructures. In most cases the results will be provided to the scientific community in an open access format, so that the data obtained through this process can be used numerous times and support current as well as future research. Further opportunities will be published in the next BCNetter, scheduled for February 2024.

BCNet continues to provide educational material and ad hoc support to its members as requested, in the form of information or customized, hands-on training. We would ask all of our members to feel free to connect with us when the need arises. In order to facilitate bilateral dialogues, 'office hours' will be established, i.e., dedicated regular times that can be booked in advance for bilateral meetings between the members and the coordination team.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you, your needs, thoughts and opinions as we plan for a stronger collaborative future in cancer research.

Zisis Kozlakidis and Tracy Wootton

BCNet Coordinators



Ongoing studies



Nigerian Population Structure, Genetic Variation Uncovered in Whole-Genome Sequencing Study

Aug 08, 2023 | Andrea Anderson

A team from the US, Nigeria, and the UK has started to tease out the extensive genetic diversity that exists within and between populations in Nigeria — work that is expected to lay the foundation for future genomic research and personalized medicine efforts in Africa.

Ene-Obong, CEO of the company 54 gene, added that the new research represents roughly 10 percent of ethnolinguistic groups found in Nigeria and emphasized that there are "far more populations than this in Nigeria and Africa in general, each with their unique exposures, adaptations, [and] selective histories, [who] have been uniquely influenced by disease and environment."

For population structure and other analyses presented in the study, the team compared the newly sequenced 450 Nigerian genomes to one another and to sequences for more than 400 Human Genome Diversity Project participants from countries in Africa and beyond, as well as to high-coverage sequence data for 650 African individuals assessed at the New York Genome Center for the 1000 Genomes Project.

The analyses highlighted clusters of genetically similar ethnolinguistic groups in regions of southern Nigeria that differed from groups in central and west-central Nigeria and other central western groups and groups in northwestern Nigeria. On the other hand, individuals from Fulani, Hausa, and Kanuri groups tended to be more genetically heterogenous and carried ancestry from North Africa and Europe.

Follow the link below to read the full article:

[Joshi E, Biddanda A, Popoola J et al. Whole-genome sequencing across 449 samples spanning 47 ethnolinguistic groups provides insights into genetic diversity in Nigeria. Cell Genomics. 2023; 3 \(9\).](#)

Recent publications from our Members



[Schmid A, Kozlakidis Z, Bledsoe M. Biobanking in the Asia-Pacific Region: The Challenges of International Biospecimen Sharing. Biopreserv Biobank. 2023; 21 \(4\): 316-317.](#)

[Zhou X, Li Q, Zhao Q, Zhang X, Xu Y, Qian P, et al. Toward Professionalism of Biobanking in China: A Survey on Working Status, Career Development, Challenges, and Prospects of Biobankers. Biopreserv Biobank. 2023.](#)

[Ahram, M. & Ahmad, K. Islamic Bioethics: Biobanking. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion. 2023.](#)

[Coombs H, Wootton T, Dillner J, Muller H, Berger A, Kozlakidis Z. Creating personas for exposome research: the experience from the HEAP project. Open Res Eur. 2023; 3: 28.](#)

[Sfera A, Rahman L, Zapata-Martin Del Campo CM, Kozlakidis Z. Long COVID as a Tauopathy: Of "Brain Fog" and "Fusogen Storms". Int J Mol Sci. 2023; 24 \(16\).](#)

[Liu NN, Yi CX, Wei LQ, Zhou JA, Jiang T, Hu CC, et al. The intratumor mycobiome promotes lung cancer progression via myeloid-derived suppressor cells. Cancer Cell. 2023.](#)

[Kintossou AK, Blanco-Lopez J, Iguacel I, Pisanu S, Almeida CCB, Steliarova-Foucher E, et al. Early Life Nutrition Factors and Risk of Acute Leukemia in Children: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. Nutrients. 2023; 15 \(17\).](#)

[Bogaert B, Kozlakidis Z, Caboux E, Peron J, Saintigny P. What went right during the COVID crisis: The capabilities of local actors and lasting innovations in oncology care and research. PLOS Glob Public Health. 2023; 3 \(9\): e0002366.](#)

[Sfera A, Klein C, Anton JJ, Kozlakidis Z, Andronesu CV. The Role of Lactylation in Mental Illness: Emphasis on Microglia. Neuroglia. 2023; 4 \(2\): 119-140.](#)

[Elkhwsky F, Allam A, Kozlakidis Z, Shaikhah A, Elhameed AA. In Response to "Establishing Biobanking in Medical Curricula-The Education Program 'Precision Medicine International' \(eduBRoTHER\)" in Biopreservation and Biobanking. Published on November 11, 2022 by Seidler D., et al. Biopreserv Biobank. 2023.](#)

Recent and upcoming meetings and conferences



IARC/WHO was represented at the Science Summit at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA78), which opened on 12 September 2023. Dr Zisis Kozlakidis, participated in the UNGA78 Science Summit, alongside colleagues from Qatar, Tunisia and the USA. The meeting was supported by the permanent mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations. This hybrid (in-person and online) meeting makes a major contribution to advancing science for the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More details can be found online:

[\(https://sciencesummitunga.com/ssunga78/\)](https://sciencesummitunga.com/ssunga78/).



The 3rd European Biobank Roadshow took place on September 27–28 in Innsbruck, Austria. It was organized by the European, Middle Eastern & African Society for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB), in collaboration with the Biobanking and Biomolecular Resources Research Infrastructure (BBMRI-ERIC) (https://esbb.org/page/Event_listing)

The theme of this successful meeting was “health & biobank data integration, data management and data transfer between biobanks and European platforms, and data extraction from various health data sources”. The challenges of data integration across biobanks were the acute focus of many discussions, especially in the wake of the pandemic, where pivoting many operations on the digital space became an operational imperative.



The World Health Summit 2023 took place in Berlin on 15–17 October, organized by Charité – Universitätsmedizin, under the high patronage of the German Chancellor, the French President, the President of the European Commission, and the Director-General of the WHO:

<https://www.worldhealthsummit.org/summit.html>

The theme of the meeting was “A Defining Year for Global Health Action”. It brought together stakeholders from politics, science, the private sector, and civil society from around the world to set the agenda for a healthier future. Biobanking was presented as part of the wider healthcare research infrastructure ecosystem.

Recent and upcoming meetings and conferences (cont.)



The International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER) held its European Regional Symposium on October 24–25 in Granada, Spain. The meeting was organized in partnership with Biobanco del Sistema Sanitario Público de Andalucía:

(<https://www.isber.org/page/2023RegionalMeeting>)

The meeting was entirely dedicated to biospecimen science, extending not only to human, but also to microbial and environmental specimens.

Biospecimen science, applied to method validation, quality control, stability studies, or cryobiology, is the scientific pillar of evidence based biobanking, and one of the most critical conditions of reproducible research.



The 14th AORTIC International Conference on Cancer in Africa took place in Dakar from 2 to 6 November 2023, bringing together multidisciplinary specialists from the global cancer community to reduce the impact of cancer in Africa.

The biennial AORTIC International Conference on Cancer in Africa is the definitive event on the African health calendar, enabling the exchange of ideas and the opportunity to learn from oncology leaders from all over Africa and around the world.

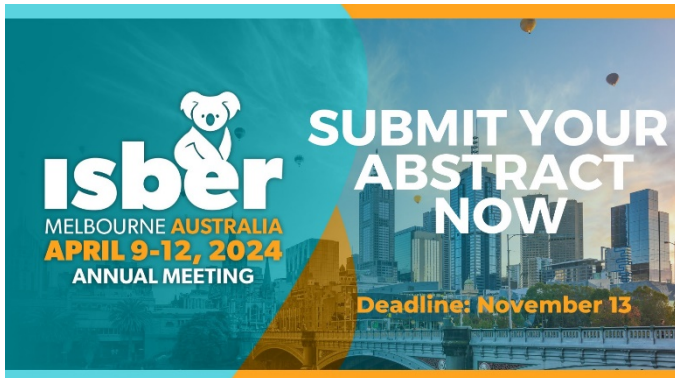


The Advancing Healthcare Innovation Summit (AHIS 2023) will take place on 11 November 2023. This is a virtual summit showcasing new and impactful innovations from across the world. Further information regarding registration and attendance can be found on the website of the Summit (<https://innovativehealthcareinstitute.com/ahis-2023/>).

As in previous years, the accepted abstracts will be published open access in one of the upcoming issues of the journal 'Innovations in Digital Health, Diagnostics and Biomarkers' (<https://meridian.allenpress.com/innovationsjournal-s-iddb>).

The 2023 International Symposium on Cryobiology and Living Biobanking meeting will take place in Changsha, China from November 18–21, showcasing the latest developments in biobanking in China and the wider south-east Asian region. The focus this year will be on the regional developments during the pandemic, and the exchange of experiences, expertise and innovations, from different partners from within the region and internationally. For more details online or a copy of the program, please contact Ms Tracy Wootton.

Upcoming meetings and conferences



The ISBER 2024 Annual Meeting and Exhibits will take place in Melbourne, Australia on April 9–12, 2024. Information for registration is available online (<https://www.isber.org/page/2024Annual>), while the deadline for abstract submissions is on 13 November 2024.

Please note that BCNet members can become ISBER members without additional cost. For further information, please contact Ms Wootton.



The European Biobank Week (EBW) 2024 will take place in Vienna, Austria, on May 14–17. The EBW congress will highlight state-of-the-art biobanking innovations and research. This action-packed congress will feature keynote presentations, panels and workshops organized jointly by ESBB and BBMRI-ERIC. Further details and information on registration will be released soon online (<https://www.europebiobankweek.eu/>).

Opportunities for funding, training & collaboration



canSERV
providing cutting edge
cancer research services
across europe

canSERV Open Call Invites Cancer Researchers to Apply for Free State of the Art Services and Training.

European-wide research infrastructures offer a portfolio of services to address the needs of the entire oncological research pipeline.

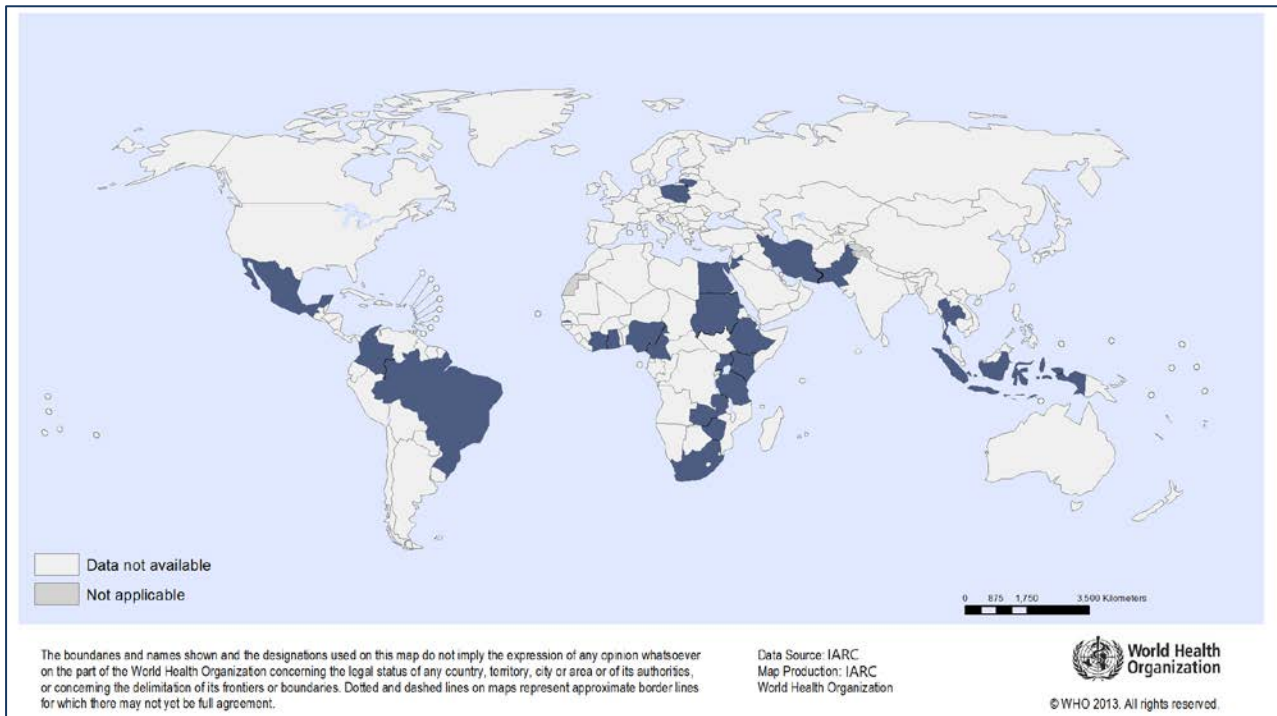
As part of a concerted strategy to tackle the challenges of cancer, the EU-funded project canSERV offers more than 400 innovative cancer research technologies to European and non-European cancer researchers at all levels. The service, or a combination of services and training, can be requested to accelerate ground-breaking discoveries and their translation into clinical applications.

This is a major opportunity to fund well-designed cancer research projects, with a deadline for submissions the 4th of January 2024. Further details can be found online:

(<https://www.canserv.eu/calls/open-call-for-transnational-service-provision/>).



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



Contacts:

Dr Zisis Kozlakidis
KozlakidisZ@iacr.who.int

Ms Tracy Wootton
WoottonT@iacr.who.int

+33 4 72 73 80 35

<http://bcnet.iarc.fr/>