

BCNetter

Issue No. 24, June 2024



Annual HEAP Symposium at IARC (27-28 May 2024)

Dear **BCNet Members**,

The last few months have been very busy with a number of meetings on biobanking taking place in different parts of the world. These meetings have supported the exchanging of knowledge and fostering of collaborations within the biobanking community in what seems a full return to the pre-pandemic years. Sessions covered a broad spectrum of topics, including ethical considerations, data sharing, standardization of biobanking practices, and the integration of biobanks with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, green technologies and genomic medicine. The biobanking field is growing and through these meetings supports the exchange of knowledge while aiming to enhance the quality and accessibility of biological samples and data, ultimately accelerating biomedical research and the development of personalized medicine.

It has been great to see the strong presence of BCNet members in all of these meetings: the ISBER 2024 Annual Meeting in Melbourne, Australia; the 2024 European Biobank Week (EBW) in Vienna, Austria; the Annual Human Exposome Assessment Platform (HEAP), and the Symposium on Ethical, Legal and Societal Insights (ELSI) and outlook for biobanks and medical research – the latter two both hosted at IARC, Lyon, France.

Furthermore, there were presentations of BCNet at the Malaysian Ministry of Health, Biobanking group, with more anticipated for interested parties in the Philippines, Peru, Brazil, China, Egypt and Indonesia in the coming months. Reports from all these meetings will be provided in the next BCNetter.

While a BCNet meeting is not envisaged in and by itself, discussions have been initiated for a potential side-event during future meetings, where the potential footprint of BCNet can become even more visible, further accelerating discussions that center on biobanks and medical research infrastructures based in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

IARC will continue to identify opportunities with partner organizations, such as the NCI/NIH, ISBER, BBMRI-ERIC, CCDC, the Karolinska Institutet, and others where BCNet members can participate and promote their inclusion into the program, in-person and/or online- and of course BCNet members are more than welcome to also highlight such opportunities through direct contact with the coordination team.

As always, all BCNet members should feel free to contact us at any point - comments and input are always welcome.

Zisis Kozlakidis and Tracy Wootton
BCNet Coordinators



Upcoming meetings and conferences



Global Cancer Research and Control Seminar Series - Thursday June 13, 2024

On behalf of the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI), you are invited to attend the Global Cancer Research and Control Seminar Series on **Thursday June 13, 2024, from 10:00–11:00am ET.**

This virtual session will feature a presentation led by Drs Gaurav Narula and Hasmukh Jain, where they will discuss the initiation and development of India's first CAR T-cell program. Drs Narula and Jain will cover early collaboration with the NCI, development and results of the paediatric and adult trials, and commercial approval and roll-out.

Registration (free) is required for this event - [register here](#).

The NCI Global Cancer Research and Control Seminar Series, hosted by the NCI Center for Global Health (CGH), features talks by researchers and cancer control experts working in global oncology. The seminars provide opportunities for discussion and collaboration around impactful and innovative work that addresses cancer morbidity and mortality worldwide. To learn more about the NCI Center for Global Health, visit our [website](#), subscribe to the [CGH Exchange Newsletter](#), and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#)

For questions, please contact [Ms. Nina Ghanem](#).



AORTIC 2025

AORTIC's 15th International Conference on Cancer in Africa will take place in the vibrant city of Hammamet, Tunisia.

It will bring together multidisciplinary specialists from the global cancer community to reduce the impact of cancer in Africa.

Contact: aortic2025@aortic-africa.org;
www.aorticconference.org



GET Webinar Series

The May Edition of the GET Webinar Series 2024 focused on "Opportunities and Challenges for Scaling up Vaccine Production in Africa."

The webinar recording is available [here](#).

Opportunities for funding, training & collaboration



Bioaster are currently planning a new project on AMR and want to analyse data in LMIC and HIC. This is based on the Trinity Challenge:

[What is The Trinity Challenge? | The Trinity Challenge](#)

Their approach is to look at how AMR data, and its analysis, can reduce the impact of AMR in LMIC countries, while at the same time potentially carrying out a comparison of the causes of AMR in LMIC and HIC. The idea is to address what is causation versus what is correlation in the datasets and using advanced computing to carry out such analyses. This would potentially use existing datasets but should also include getting prospective data to add to the analyses. The project would be led by Bioaster's data analysis teams, which include biostatisticians and experts in AI and machine learning, but also with input from their antimicrobial and diagnostics programmes.

If you are interested in joining this project, please contact Zisis Kozlakidis (KozlakidisZ@iarc.who.int)

Invitation to join AORTICHORG

AORTIC members are cordially invited to join the AORTIC Haematology Oncology Research Group (AORTICHORG) that was created as a research organ in 2010 and serves as a resource body within AORTIC to organize and co-ordinate research programs in the discipline of haematological oncology.

Members of AORTICHORG meet physically at the AORTIC biennial meetings, and virtually in between them, to discuss topics of the discipline of haematological oncology. AORTICHORG organizes and holds sessions dedicated to haematological malignancies at the AORTIC biennial meetings.



Over the past several years, members of the group have worked together to develop a clinical trial protocol to investigate clinical and laboratory features of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia in children and young adults in the South-Western region of Nigeria. This highly innovative protocol, which including investigations with immunohistochemistry, flow cytometry, cytogenetics, and genomics, as well as an innovative treatment protocol, will be activated at two Nigerians medical schools as soon as funding is procured.

AORTICHORG is planning to expand its research activities to cover other hematological malignancies, while reaching out to other parts of the continent.

Membership of the group, is open to all, including clinical, laboratory and basic scientific disciplines.

Advantages of AORTICHORG membership include:

- Eligibility for consideration for leadership positions within AORTICHORG
- Eligibility to serve as Investigators, including Principal Investigators
- Participation in developments of research programs
- Opportunities to develop individual protocols for sharing with others,
- Participation in drafting research documents, research manuscripts and drafting of collective publication manuscripts, etc.

Interested AORTIC members are urged to contact Ms Belmira Rodrigues, Managing Director of AORTIC, belmira.rodrigues@aortic-africa.org, with the following:

- Full name
- E-mail address
- Professional discipline (Physician, pediatrician, nurse, surgeon, pathologist, radiologist, radiation oncologist, epidemiologist, biostatistician, basic scientist, et),
- Research interest.

News from IARC Biobanking Group



Drs Elodie Caboux and Stephanie Villar will deliver keynote presentations on 26–27 June in Lima, Peru, at the Inauguration of Peru's National Tumor Biobank (created by Peruvian law of 2021 "For the creation of a biobank and an associated national network"), coupled with a biennial meeting of REBLAC (network of cancer biobanks in Latin America and the Caribbean).

This is the first such collaboration between BCNet, the Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas (INEN), Peru, and l' Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD), France.

These presentations will be followed during the first week of July by a site-visit and the delivery of two biobanking workshops at Barretos Hospital, Sao Paulo, Brazil- in collaboration with Barretos Hospital and Drs Márcia Marques Silveira and Marianna Murra, as well as IIPAN and Dr Elena Ladas.



On the 19 of June, Dr Kozlakidis will deliver a webinar on the topic of "International trends and standards in biobanking" in collaboration with the Biobanking Core Facility at the Philippine Genome Center. The Philippines is moving towards strengthening its biobanking activities and is currently benchmarking its biobanking field, in support of further development of the national genomic initiatives.



Recent publications from our Members



[Akyüz K, Cano Abadía M, Goisau M, Mayrhofer MT. Unlocking the potential of big data and AI in medicine: insights from biobanking. *Front Med \(Lausanne\)*. 2024; 11: 1336588.](#)

[Cheong IH, Garcia DL, Kozlakidis Z, Shao Y, Wang H. Developing a New, Digitally Integrated Research Infrastructure: Results of the Macau Biobank Survey. *Innovations in Digital Health, Diagnostics, and Biomarkers*. 2024; 4 \(2024\): 25-30.](#)

[Eklund N, Engels C, Neumann M, Strug A, van Enckevort E, Baber R, Bloemers M, Debuquoy A, van der Lugt A, Müller H, Parkkonen L, Quinlan PR, Urwin E, Holub P, Silander K, Anton G. Update of the Minimum Information About Biobank Data Sharing \(MIABIS\) Core Terminology to the 3\(rd\) Version. *Biopreserv Biobank*. 2024.](#)

[Mei L, Song Y, Liu X, Li K, Guo X, Liu L, Liu Y, Kozlakidis Z, Cheong IH, Wang D, Wei Q. Characterization and Implications of IncP-2A Plasmid pMAS152 Harboring Multidrug Resistance Genes in Extensively Drug-Resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. *Microorganisms*. 2024; 12 \(3\).](#)

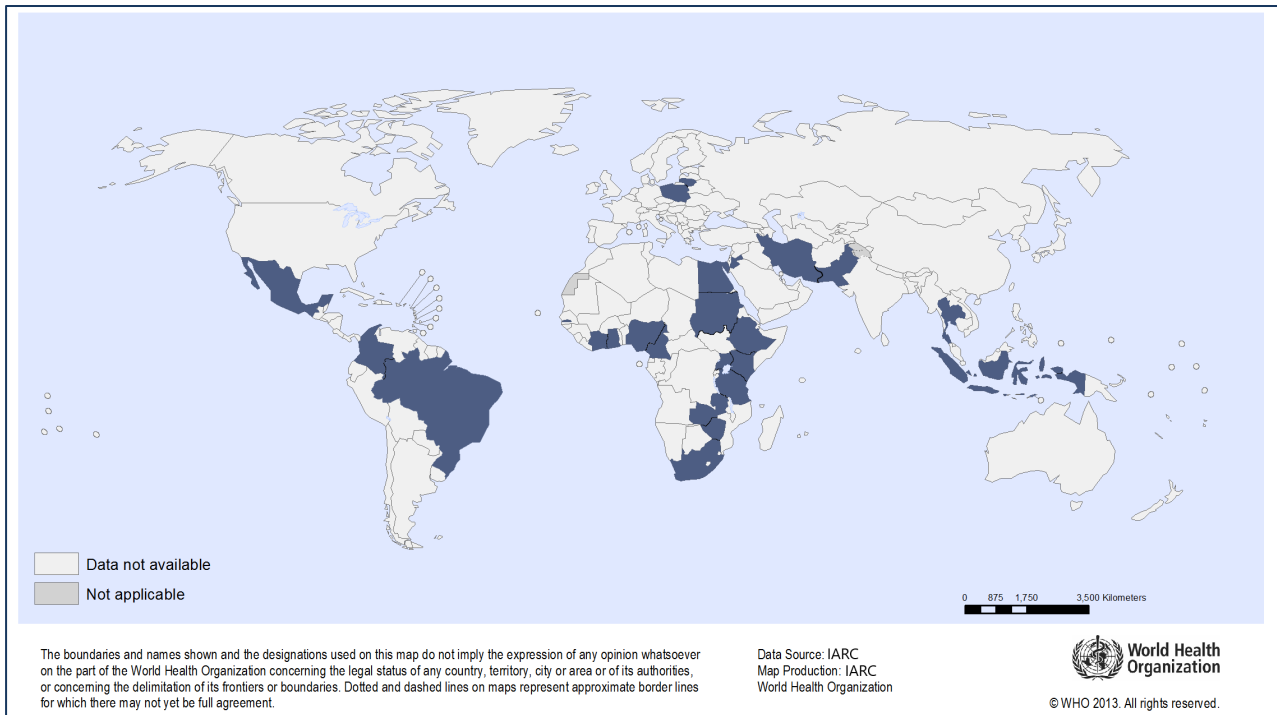
[Rivera-Alcántara JA, Esparza-Hurtado N, Galán-Ramírez GA, Cruz-Bautista I, Mehta R, Aguilar-Salinas CA, Martagon AJ. A systematic review of biobanks in Latin America: Strengths and limitations for biomedical research. *Int J Biol Markers*. 2024; 39 \(2\): 91-106.](#)

[Sfera A, Hazan S, Kozlakidis Z. Microbial translocation disorders: a new concept in pathophysiology 2024.](#)

[Sohail M, Moreno-Estrada A. The Mexican Biobank Project promotes genetic discovery, inclusive science and local capacity building. *Dis Model Mech*. 2024; 17 \(1\).](#)

[The International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories Presents Abstracts from Its 2024 Annual Meeting. *Biopreservation and Biobanking*. 2024.](#)

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; Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, University of Ghana; **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 Cancerología; **NIGERIA:** College of Medicine, University of Ibadan; Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital; Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex; **PAKISTAN:** Indus Hospital & Health Network; Liaquat University of Medical Health and Sciences; Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre; **POLAND:** Biobank Lab, Department of Molecular Biophysics, University of Lodz; Wrocław Research Centre EIT+ Biobank; **SOUTH AFRICA:** National Health Laboratory Service, 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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