

BCNetter

Issue No. 26, February 2025



Dear BCNet Members,



Launch of the Arab Biobank Network (ABN) project

The last couple of months have been punctuated by a very active set of initiatives on biobanking. Here we will mention only four, however, there are many more taking place. Collectively, they demonstrate the value that biobanking brings to large scale research and the willingness of stakeholders to support well-argued biobanking-led initiatives.

The first such initiative was the launch of the Arab Biobank Network (ABN) project, by the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, in cooperation with Ain Shams University, and IARC/WHO, in Cairo, Egypt. A one-day conference was held on Thursday, December 19, 2024, at the Faculty of Medicine – at Ain Shams University, under the patronage of Professor Mohamed Diaa Zain El-Abedeem, President of Ain Shams University.

The Arab Biobanking Network, under the umbrella of the League of Arab States as the network's funding body, aims to enhance Arab cooperation in the fields of research, development and innovation. The project operates within the framework of the Arab Research, Development and Innovation Alliance (ARICA), which is one of the initiatives supporting joint Arab action.

The network aims to enhance the preservation of biological samples by supporting integrated biobanks that serve scientific and medical research and encourage cooperation between Arab countries to develop advanced medical studies and contribute to developing effective solutions to common health challenges among Arab countries.

A second initiative was the international conference on Biobanking in Alexandria Egypt, hosted by the University of Alexandria on December 21st, 2024. This was held in parallel to the graduation of the MSc students in Biobanking by the University of Alexandria and supported by the Egyptian Association for Cancer Research (EACR), BCNet and the Egyptian Alliance of Biobanks (EAB). It brought together international views on biobanking from the academia as well as industry, e.g., ASKION, and allowed the interaction of the MSc students with skilled professionals in the field.



International conference on Biobanking in Egypt

Thirdly, the Philippines have announced the creation of a core facility that will include a Molecular and Genomics Research Laboratory, Biobank, and Tumor Bank at the Philippine Cancer Center, in Manila. This will be the foundational step towards establishing a network of cancer-related biobanks in the country in the near future.

Finally, the 10 years of BCNet activities were presented to a group of Masters and Undergraduate students from the University of Wageningen, the Netherlands, visiting IARC/WHO. The presentation attracted much attention on the challenges but primarily the opportunities for cancer research present in resource-restricted settings.



Visit to IARC from students from the University of Wageningen

These are just some of the many examples through which Biobanking and biobanking networks add value to research and create impact for healthcare research and society as a whole. We invite you to enjoy the current Newsletter, and as always if there are any questions, comments or ideas, please feel free to contact us.

Zisis Kozlakidis and Tracy Wootton
BCNet Coordinators

News from our members



Current Practices, Barriers, and the Drive for Global Partnerships in LMIC Biobanks: A Comprehensive Qualitative Survey Project. by Eszter Tuboly

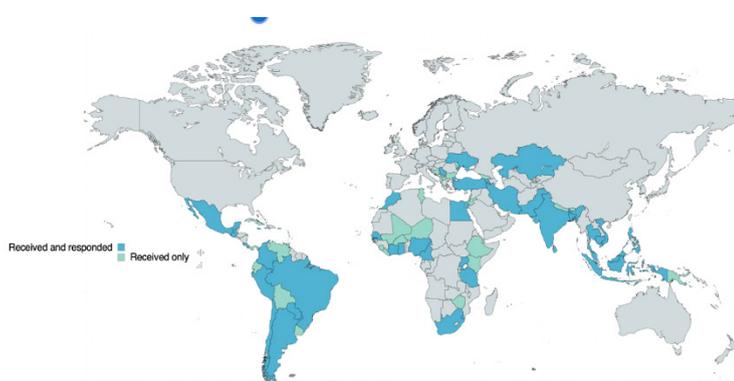
There has been a recent surge in the establishment of human biobanks in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), yet several regions have received limited attention in the literature. In this survey project, we aimed to explore the detailed views of LMIC biobank professionals regarding their current operations, barriers, and perspectives on collaboration.

The survey received responses from 87 participants representing 70, primarily disease-associated institutions in 42 LMICs across five global regions: Europe and Eurasia, Asia, the Arab World, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Collection practices varied, with 48.8% of the participants collecting both pediatric and adult samples and data and only 2 participating institutions having pediatric-specific collections. Compliance with international quality standards seemed uneven, with 50.6% of participants adhering to ISBER Best Practices, 30.2% following the IARC Minimum Technical Requirements, and 25.2% reporting adherence to ISO 20387.

The most significant hurdles, as expected, were financial and infrastructural limitations (89% - 69.6%), but notably, 57.6% mentioned the lack of educated professionals as a major issue. Additionally, 74.4% of respondents expressed an interest in joining international biobank organizations for support, while 78% and 63.4% indicated desirable partnerships with other established biobanks and international NGOs, respectively. Although the latter showed particularly high regional variability.

A 13-item questionnaire was designed to comprehensively assess the professionals' general and pediatric biobanking activities, the related operational challenges and needs, and their willingness and potential for collaboration with international biobanking and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



Countries highlighted with light blue coloring represent the countries of the survey participants. Countries highlighted with green color illustrate the remaining countries with biobanking or databanking involvement as identified by the literature review, but no survey responses were received from these States.

Upcoming meetings



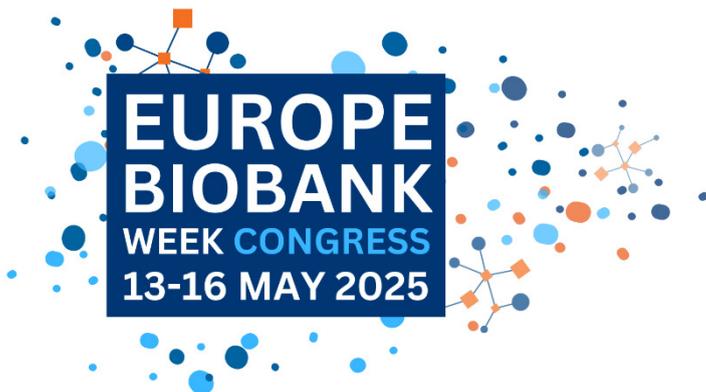
ISBER 2025 Annual Meeting and Exhibits

Meeting theme: Northern Lights: Impact of the Global Biobanking Spectrum / Aurores Boréales : Impact du Spectre Mondial des Biobanques

Venue:

Hotel Bonaventure Montreal, 900 Rue De la Gauchetière O, Montreal, Quebec H5A 1E4, Canada

For further information: visit the ISBER 2025 website: [Annual Meeting and Exhibits Website](#)



Join the most important event of the year in the global biobanking community!

[Sponsorship](#) and [registration](#) now OPEN.
[Call for abstracts](#) is now OPEN.

For further information: visit the Europe Biobank Week website:
<https://www.europebiobankweek.eu/>

BIOMED-AI SUMMER SCHOOL

This year's BioMed-AI Summer School will take place from 26–28th May in Lyon, France

The event, co-organized by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), promises to be an exciting gathering of leading experts, innovators, and thought leaders at the intersection of biomedical research, AI, and healthcare. It's a unique opportunity to explore the future of healthcare, discuss cutting-edge innovations, and network with some of the brightest minds in the field.

For further information: visit the BioMed-AI website: <https://biomedai-summerschool.gr/>



Special announcement – AORTIC 2025 – New Dates!

“Advancing Cancer Care Across Africa: Equity through Empowering Research and Education. Harnessing African Partnership to Drive Quality of Cancer Care and Patient Outcomes”.

Due to requests concerning an important coinciding event, the decision has been made to reschedule the AORTIC conference to best accommodate the members and participants.

AORTIC 2025 will now take place from **2-5 November 2025**. For more information contact: aortic2025@aortic-africa.org

Opportunities for funding, training & collaboration



BIO special issue – call for papers

Late last year, BIO launched a call for papers for a **special issue/section on biobanks and biorepositories in Latin America**.

The initial deadline, which was 31 December 2024, has been extended for 3 months to 31 March 2025. Here is the [link to the call for papers](#).

Please disseminate this information to any of your colleagues who may be interested.

The editors hope that the papers published as a result of this call will contribute to increasing the visibility of biobanks in the region, disseminating practices and strategies to improve their operation and sustainability, and ultimately improving their integration with the global biobanking community.

Opportunity for editorial fellowships for Innovations in Digital Health, Diagnostics, and Biomarkers (IDDB) journal.

Each year, IDDB invites applications for 1-year, part-time, volunteer editorial fellowships beginning August 1, from medical professionals who have an interest in medical publishing and digital health.

Fellows will gain knowledge and skills in writing, peer reviewing, proofreading, and disseminating content via social media and other outlets by engaging with the IDDB Editorial Board.

Applications for the 2025-26 fellowship are open now until 2 June 2025.

For further information, visit the website: https://meridian.allenpress.com/innovationsjournals-IDDB/pages/iddb_editorial_fellowship

Recent publications from our Members



Simeon-Dubach D, Kozlakidis Z, Tayal J, McCall SJ, Hasan W, Betsou F, Lawson J, Allen D. Experts Speak Forum: Implementation of the FAIR Principles in Biobanking Needs Fair Incentives. [Biopreserv Biobank. 2024; 22 \(6\): 557-562.](#)

Hartanti W, Wahdi AE, Prasetyawati T, Izhati QA, Fachiroh J. Developing Informed Consent for Academic Hospital-Based Biobank Modeling: An Experience from Indonesia. [Biopreserv Biobank. 2024.](#)

Aisyah DN, Setiawan AH, Lokopessy AF, Faradiba N, Setiaji S, Manikam L, Kozlakidis Z. The Information and Communication Technology Maturity Assessment at Primary Health Care Services Across 9 Provinces in Indonesia: Evaluation Study. [JMIR Med Inform. 2024; 12: e55959.](#)

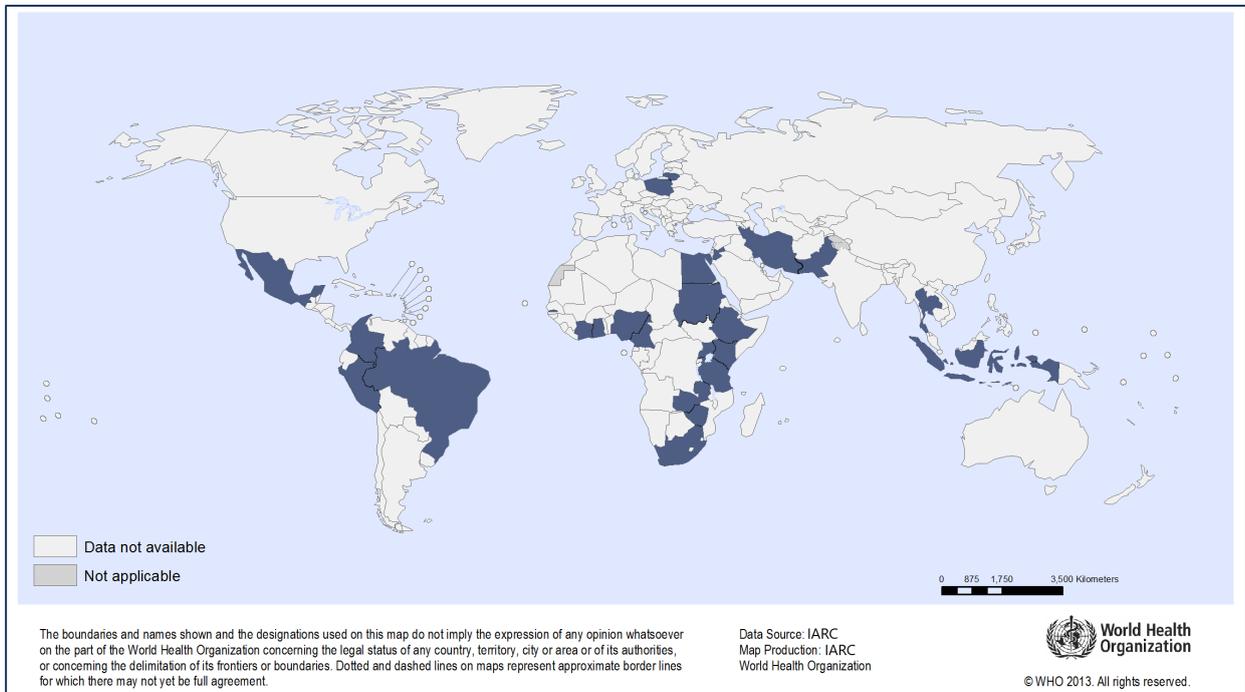
Mei L, Song Y, Liu X, Li K, Guo X, Liu L, Liu Y, Kozlakidis Z, Cheong IH, Wang D, Wei Q. Characterization and Implications of IncP-2A Plasmid pMAS152 Harboring Multidrug Resistance Genes in Extensively Drug-Resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. [Microorganisms. 2024; 12 \(3\).](#)

Sfera A, Anton JJ, Luong JHC, Kozlakidis Z. Post-traumatic stress disorder: Cerebral and extracerebral processing of traumatic memories and treatment strategies. [Global Translational Medicine. 2024; 3 \(4\).](#)

Kozlakidis Z, Jayasekar Zurn S. (2025) Cancer and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). [Open Access Government, 44, 30-31.](#)

Fachiroh J, Lestari SK, Paramita DK, Bintoro BS, Dewi FST, Lazuardi L, Rusadi CP, Sagenah EN, Arguni E. Seroconversion and dynamics of IgG anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies during the pandemic: A two-month observation cohort study on the population of Sleman in Indonesia. [PLoS One. 2025; 20 \(1\): e0316360.](#)

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; National Museum of Egyptian Civilization; Shifaa Al Orman Hospital, Luxor; South Egypt Cancer Institute, Assiut University; Suez Canal University; Theodor Bilharz Research Institute; **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; **PERU:** Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Neoplásicas; **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



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/>