

BCNetter

Issue No. 27, June 2025



Dear BCNet Members,

The last few months have proven very busy for all with several meetings and conferences in different parts of the world. These meetings support the exchange and transfer of knowledge and expertise in a world that is increasingly becoming multi-polar.

For example, it was great to see so many members from Central and South America attend the ISBER 2025 annual conference in Montreal, Canada. Similarly, the European Biobank Week (EBW) in Bologna, Italy broke the attendance record with over 800 participants from across Europe and the world. These numbers demonstrate that the biobanking field, though modest in size, continues to attract young talent and to support research at scale. However, the aims for many biobanks continue to remain the same, i.e., an acute focus on enhancing the quality and accessibility of biological samples and data, supporting local and national research and ultimately accelerating biomedical research and the development of personalized medicine.

Additionally, it was great to see biobanking being included in the discussions of the Exposome Moonshot program in Washington DC, USA (including an entire session dedicated to presenting biobanking infrastructures) in conjunction with the input by the International Human Exposome Network (IHEN). Furthermore, at IARC/WHO there was a strong representation of colleagues from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) in the BioMed-AI summer school, co-organized with the Digital Health Literacy & Policy Hub, the Institute for Sustainable Development – EPLO, and Archimedes, Athena Research Center, Greece. During this latter meeting the readiness of biobanks to respond to AI-driven requests was discussed and how the structured data already existing within biobanks may be a ready resource to develop and adopt such technologies.

This issue of the BCNetter highlights the ISEBIO research collaboration opportunity; the editorial fellowship by the IDDB journal; provides information on upcoming conferences, relevant webinars and publications and invites members to participate in academic surveys.

We would also like to welcome one new member to BCNet, the Macau Society for Health Economics, Macau, China, which is a focal point in bringing together biobanking activities in Lusophone LMICs.

The strength of the BCNet comes from the engagement of its members, and we invite our members to feel free to contact us at any time – comments and input are always welcome.

Zisis Kozlakidis and Tracy Wootton
BCNet Coordinators



ISBER 2025 Annual conference in Montreal, Canada

News from our members



Introducing the Latin American and Caribbean Biobank Network (REBLAC)



The Latin American and Caribbean Biobank Network (REBLAC) is a non-profit association made up of biobanks linked to public or private institutions dedicated to the fight against cancer in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

REBLAC, initially called the Network of Tumor Banks of Latin America and the Caribbean, formally began its work as an operational group of the Alliance for Cancer Control in 2008 with the participation of 7 countries: Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Subsequently, from 2011 to 2016, REBLAC became an operational group of the Network of National Cancer Institutes (RINC) of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). However, since 2016, REBLAC repositioned itself, as an organization that "will be autonomous, apolitical, and non-profit. Its internal organization and functioning will be democratic and will fully respect the pluralism of its activities."



Participants at the 10th Annual REBLAC meeting

Today REBLAC is a dynamic and successful network of biobanks that includes members from 13 countries. In 2024, during the 10th Annual REBLAC meeting Drs Stephanie Villar and Elodie Caboux attended the meeting, demonstrating in person the support that IARC/WHO provides to this initiative. Further joint initiatives between REBLAC and BCNET are currently in discussion, with a first announcement anticipated for the next BCNetter!

Webinars



IARC is pleased to announce a series of webinars related to the [HEAP project](#) that aims to understand the impact of the exposome on health and society.

The first webinar in the series will discuss the ethical and legal aspects of exposome research and will take place on **Monday 16 June at 14:00-15:00 CEST**
Please click on [this link to register](#)

The second webinar in the series will discuss the use of wearables such as smartwatches for observational research. It will take place on **Friday 27 June at 14:00-15:00 CEST**
Please click on [this link to register](#)



PATH Webinar: Biobanking for Pandemic Preparedness

[PATH](#) and [CEPI](#) hosted a webinar on May 22, 2025, as a forum for researchers to present current work on biobanking for pandemic response, strengthen existing and new collaborations, and share experiences and lessons learned with the broader research community.

Watch the recording [here](#).

Upcoming meetings



Inaugural meeting of the 1st Arab Biobank Collaborative Network

As announced in the last issue of the BCNetter, the Arab Biobank Network (ABN) project, was launched by the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, in cooperation with Ain Shams University, and IARC/WHO, in Cairo, Egypt last December.

The inaugural meeting of the 1st Arab Biobank Collaborative Network will take place in **July 2025**.



ISBER 2025 Argentina Regional Meeting – Buenos Aires

The ISBER 2025 Argentina Regional Meeting will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from September 12 – 13, 2025.

ISBER delegates who are interested in this meeting should [visit the Garrahan Foundation events page](#) to register. Please note that space is very limited and interested delegates are encouraged to register as soon as possible.



ISBER 2025 Joint Biobanking Conference - Cape Town



The ISBER 2025 Joint Biobanking Conference will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from **September 29–October 3, 2025**.

This meeting brings together leading experts, researchers, and industry professionals from the fields of biodiversity and human biobanking, and offers a platform for collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange. This year's theme, "Where Worlds Align: Biodiversity and Human Biobanks", will explore the intersection of science, policy, and practice in these fields.

Important Dates:

Early Bird Registration: Early bird registration will be open from April 1 - June 30.

Abstract Submissions: Abstract submissions will be open from April 1 - August 31.

For more information about the program, speakers, and registration, [please visit the meeting website](#).



AORTIC 2025

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

AORTIC 2025 will take place from **2-5 November 2025**.

For more information contact:
aortic2025@aortic-africa.org



Editorial Fellowship for Innovations in Digital Health, Diagnostics, and Biomarkers

Each year, the journal [IDDB](#) invites applications for 1-year, part-time, volunteer editorial fellowships beginning August 1, from medical professionals or medical-related researchers 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 **June 9, 2025**.

Requirements:

- Willingness to dedicate 1-2 hours per week for the Journal
- Two or more publications in peer-reviewed journals is preferred

Responsibilities:

- Assist the Editor with peer review assignments
- Interview authors and industry experts
- Increase awareness about IDDB among colleagues

Fellowship completion depends on participating in monthly meetings and completing assigned tasks in a timely manner. Fellows can work remotely from any location.

Please send curriculum vitae and a letter of interest to the Innovations Journals Editorial Office at editor@innovationsjournals.com by **June 9, 2025**.

Call to participate in the ISEBIO study:



Oral squamous cell carcinomas (OSCC) represent the most common site of all head & neck squamous cell carcinomas. OSCC may be preceded by an oral potentially malignant disorder (OPMD), associated with different grades of dysplasia. ISEBIO project aims at improving stratification of patients with E-/L by refining oral cancer-risk assessment. This will be achieved through the genomic and transcriptomic

analysis of formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded samples of E-/L from a retrospective multicentric international cohort of 500 patients with available clinical follow-up.

So far, 150–200 patients have been included through the EU COST funded Action INTERCEPTOR (CA21140). Leveraging the IARC BCNet network will allow to enrich the diversity of the collection. The initial goal is to generate molecular profiles to accurately determine copy-number alterations [including loss of heterozygosity (LOH)], targeted point mutations and gene expression signatures, funded by Institut National du Cancer (INCa N°2021-160, PREV-BIO 2021).

This effort represents the first step toward understanding the evolution of precancer cells in their ecosystem.

If you are interested, please contact Pierre Saintigny pierre.saintigny@lyon.unicancer.fr.

Full documentation is available here:

<https://interceptoralcancer.com/scientists/research>

Survey Request: Ethical risks of multi-omics & AI in Biomedical Research:

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire to explore **risk perceptions** around the use of **multi-omics technologies** and **AI data analysis** performed on **biobank patient samples**. Results of this research will be used to inform biobank ethical review committees on these developments.

My name is Boris Uitham, I am a master's student for "Management, Policy Analysis & Entrepreneurship in Health and Life Sciences" at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and for my internship at UMC Utrecht I am conducting research titled "*Stakeholder Risk Perception of Usage of Multi-omics and Machine Learning Data Analysis on Biobank Materials*".

This research topic is prompted by the increasing usage of multi-omics technologies and AI-driven data analysis on biological patient samples in biobanks.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to:

- Quantify the **risk perceptions** of biomedical researchers and biobank committee members regarding **multi-omics and AI use on biobank samples**
- Identify the factors that are of influence on these perceptions

- Gain insights on how these perceptions could affect a **possible transformation from curative towards preventive healthcare**

Completing this questionnaire will only require a small portion of your time, roughly **10 minutes**, but your participation is invaluable to my research.

Participation is completely voluntary, and all responses will be pseudonymized in to ensure confidentiality. The resulting data will be stored securely, complying with the ethical guidelines of VU Amsterdam and UMC Utrecht.

Click this link to participate:

https://vuamsterdam.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0uifEj6eRBKp5Qy

For any questions, please contact me at b.utham@umcutrecht.nl

Survey Dissemination - Identifying Barriers for Smoking Cessation in Cancer Care:

We are pleased to share an important global survey as part of the **AIRSPACE Study** aimed at identifying and addressing barriers to effective tobacco dependency treatment in thoracic cancer care and conducted by the IASLC Tobacco Control and Smoking Cessation Committee. This international initiative aims to identify barriers and opportunities in delivering equitable and effective tobacco dependency treatment for patients with thoracic cancers.

The study gathers insights from healthcare professionals, healthcare leaders, policymakers, and individuals with lived experience of cancer to develop evidence-based recommendations and a global roadmap for improving these services.

As part of this effort, a series of targeted surveys has been launched to ensure broad and inclusive participation. It only takes a few minutes, but your perspective is essential to shaping more effective, accessible tobacco dependency services for cancer patients worldwide.

We kindly ask you to:

1. Complete the relevant survey based on your role
2. Share the survey widely within your networks.

Survey links:

- Patients with Lived Experience:
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/nottingham/patients-with-lived-experience>

- Healthcare Professionals in Thoracic Cancer Care:
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/nottingham/healthcare-professional-survey>
- Healthcare System Leaders:
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/nottingham/healthcare-system-leaders>
- Policy Leaders in Healthcare:
<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/nottingham/policy-leaders-in-healthcare>

Thank you for your support and participation!



Recent publications from our Members



[Aisyah DN, et al. Using WhatsApp for Nutrition Surveillance Among Children Under 5 Years in West Java, Indonesia: Cross-Sectional Survey and Feasibility Study.](#)

[Steinberg Z, et al. Usage of the Terms "Biorepository" and "Biobank": A Process to Achieve a Working Definition Among Global Partners.](#)

[Mohammadzadeh A, et al. Biobanking in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Data Protection Frameworks.](#)

[Furuta K, et al. Experts Speak Forum: Decarbonization for Green Biobanking-The Current Landscape and Challenges for the Future.](#)

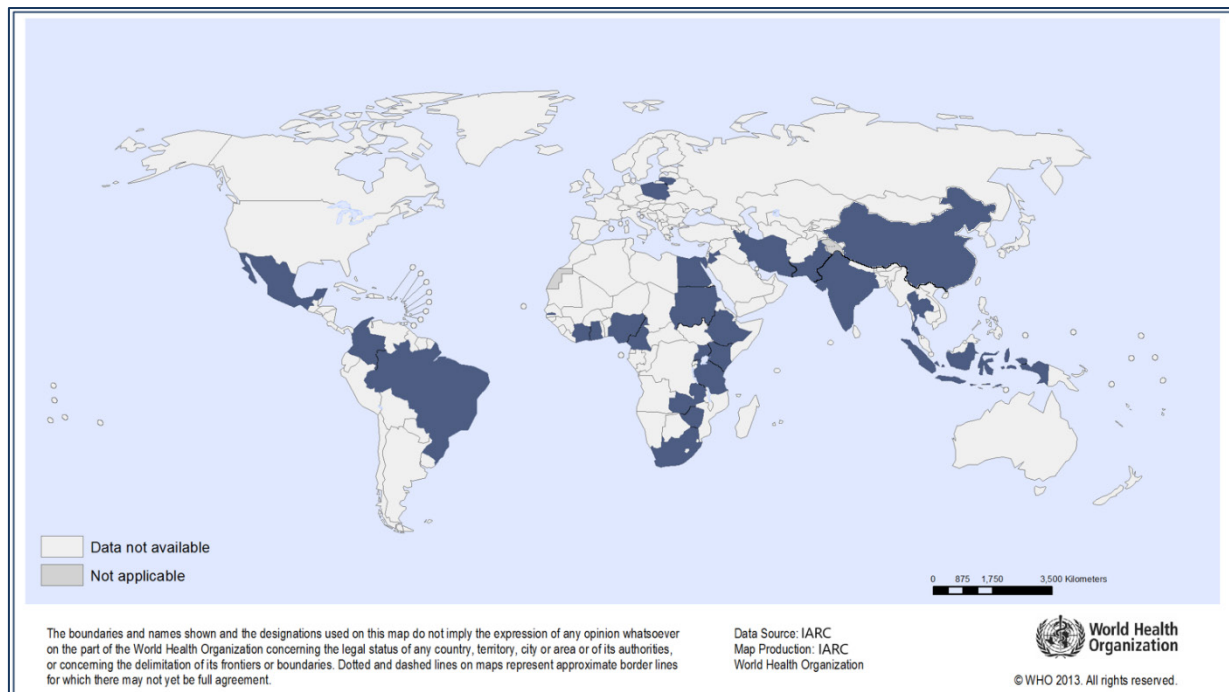
[Casavilca-Zambrano S, et al. Advancing Cancer Research Capability in Peru Through the Integration of Registries With Biobanks.](#)

[Cheong IH, et al. Technical Guideline for Low-Temperature Preservation of Pathogenic Microorganisms in China and Its Relevance to Developing Countries.](#)

[Swastini DA, et al. Ethnopharmacology and bioactive evidence of medicinal plants for wound healing in Indonesia: A scoping review](#)

[Luong JHC, et al. Structure and Roles of Phospholipase C \(PLC\), Phosphatidylinositol 4,5-bisphosphate \(PIP2\), and Inositol 1,4,5-trisphosphate \(IP3\) in Metabolism and Disease: A Systematic Review.](#)

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; **CHINA:** Macau Society for Health Economics; **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; Shaikat 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@iarc.who.int

Ms Tracy Wootton
WoottonT@iarc.who.int

+33 4 72 73 80 35

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