

# CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

## International Agency for Research on Cancer

### Mission

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. IARC's mission is to coordinate and conduct research on the causes of human cancer, the mechanisms of carcinogenesis, and to develop scientific strategies for cancer control. The Agency is involved in both epidemiological and laboratory research and disseminates scientific information through publications, meetings, courses, and fellowships.



The WHO/IARC Logo

### Staff and Budget

The Director of IARC, elected by, and reporting to, the Governing Council, is responsible for the development and implementation of the scientific programme and oversees the routine operations of the Agency. The Division of Administration and Finance supports and facilitates the Agency's scientific activities and manages the budget. For the biennium 2000-2001, the Governing Council granted the Agency a regular budget of 36 million US dollars. This is provided by the dues of the membership countries, presently Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This is supplemented by a similar sum provided by granting agencies across the globe to conduct particular research projects

In addition to the more than 130 staff employed on the regular budget, the Agency has visiting scientists, fellows and graduate students. The Agency currently employs around 270 staff from 39 countries.



The IARC Main Building  
(Photos Courtesy of Mitsuharu Masuda)

### The Four Main Objectives

1. *Monitoring global cancer occurrence.* IARC is studying cancer incidence, mortality and survival in numerous countries and is thus playing a leading role in cancer registration worldwide.

2. *Identifying the causes of cancer.* There is a strong emphasis on cancer etiology. In laboratory investigations, epidemiological studies and working group meetings, more than 800 agents and exposures have been examined with the aim of unambiguously identifying those which cause cancer in human beings.

3. *Elucidation of mechanisms of carcinogenesis.* For the purpose of elucidating mechanisms of carcinogenesis, IARC laboratories are concentrating particular attention on the interactions of carcinogens with DNA, to identify carcinogen-induced, endogenous and inherited mutations in transforming and tumour-suppressor genes.

4. *Developing scientific strategies for cancer control.* In the longer term, IARC's programmes are aimed at finding approaches to preventing cancer, including both primary prevention and early detection of cancers.

The unique role of IARC among cancer research institutes is characterized by its focus on cancer prevention, by its emphasis on studies that combine epidemiological and laboratory approaches, and by the special forum and support it provides for international collaborations.

Although the implementation of measures to control cancer is not a central part of its mission, the Agency takes part in interventions with the aim of testing their effectiveness in preventing cancers or in the early diagnosis of tumours. The Agency is not as a rule involved with research into cancer treatments.

### **IARC Press**

As a core function in dissemination of information to scientists across the globe, the Agency runs its own publications department, IARC Press, which is responsible for production and marketing of a range of literature. Major series of IARC publications are the :

- IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans (Orange Books)
- WHO Classification of Tumours: Pathology and Genetics (Blue Books)
- IARC Scientific Publications
- IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention

For the purpose of preparing for individual publications, workshops are convened with attendance by invited experts who can thus contribute their knowledge in a very practical way.

### **Meetings and Training Courses**

The IARC is active in organizing meetings and conducting training courses, both in its own buildings and elsewhere. It thus makes good use of the Sasakawa and Princess Takamatsu halls donated by Japanese funding. The tower itself was generously provided by the city of Lyon.

The majority of courses run by the Agency are to assist in development of capacity for cancer registration and epidemiological research, with a recent emphasis on molecular epidemiology. In addition, stress is placed on providing experience of new techniques and methodologies in all areas within the interest of cancer prevention.



**Sasakawa/Princess Takamatsu Hall**

### **Research Groups/Units/Special Studies**

Biostatistics and Bioinformatics	Chemoprevention	Carcinogen Identification/ Evaluation
Descriptive Epidemiology	DNA Repair	Endogenous Cancer Risk Factors
Environmental Cancer Epidemiology	Epidemiology for Cancer Prevention	Field and Intervention Studies
Gene-Environment Interactions	Genetic Cancer Epidemiology	Genetic Susceptibility to Cancer
Genome Analysis	Hormones and Cancer	Infection and Cancer
Molecular Carcinogenesis	Molecular Pathology	Nutrition and Cancer
Radiation and Cancer	The Gambia Hepatitis Intervention Study	

The present Director of the IARC, Dr Paul Kleihues, and the Head of the Unit of Descriptive Epidemiology, Dr Max Parkin, are members of the International Advisory Board of the APJCP. It is to be hoped that the new Director, on taking up the position at the beginning of 2004, will similarly be willing to act in this capacity. In addition, two of the other Unit Chiefs, Hiroko Ohgaki of Molecular Pathology, and Hiroshi Ohshima of Endogenous Cancer Risk Factors, are Editorial Board members. Hopefully, other members of staff who originate from the Asian Pacific area can be persuaded to join us in the future, especially if more countries from this region of the world become contributing members.

The IARC plays an essential role in International efforts for cancer control. Since many of its scientists are very active in the Asian Pacific, it deserves to be considered as one of the institutes in our region, even if its location is outside of our geographical area. Its continued success is of prime importance to the aims of the APOCP.