

IARC Latin America Collaboration

The directors of national cancer institutions from 15 Latin American countries (see list below), met in Lyon on the 26 and 27 March 2012 under the initiative of the [International Agency for Research on Cancer \(IARC\)](#), to discuss the current status of research on cancer prevention and control in the region.

Countries in Latin America face some of the greatest challenges in the fight against cancer. Latest figures show a projected increase in the number of new cancers from 875,000 per year in 2010 to 1.5 million by 2030. Left unchecked, the combined effects of demographic change and rising incidence rates, partly a response to increasingly “westernized” lifestyles, would place an overwhelming strain on the health programmes of most countries in the region.

In response, a number of Latin American countries are taking the lead globally on cancer and other noncommunicable disease prevention, through the development of health care infrastructures, the implementation of population-wide public health policies and programmes, and the establishment of networks for coordination and shared expertise, such as the recently created Latin American network of national cancer institutes (“[Red de Institutos Nacionales de Cáncer](#)” – [RINC/UNASUR](#)).

The participants welcomed the initiative of IARC in setting up this consultation meeting. Through this gathering the Agency sought to align its activities with identified priorities in Latin America and to develop its work in partnership with the other regional and international partners present.

The participants recognized the central role of research in providing the evidence base for effective strategies for cancer prevention and control. A number of key immediate priorities were identified:

Cancer Registration: support for the development of a regional network of cancer registries through the Agency’s [Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development in low- and middle-income countries \(GICR\)](#);

Cancer Screening: technical and scientific support for the design, implementation, quality assurance, and evaluation of appropriate screening programmes for breast, cervical and other relevant cancers;

Cancer Etiology: expansion of current multicenter epidemiological studies of the etiology of specific cancers, including premenopausal breast cancer - the [PRECAMA study](#) - and head and neck cancer - the [Interchange study](#);

Cancer Prevention: support for evaluation of current and novel prevention strategies for infection related cancers of importance in the region, such as cervical and stomach cancer, as well as for cancers related to occupational exposures;

Education and Training: develop joint training initiatives to build a solid base of cancer researchers in the region, particularly in the areas of cancer registration, epidemiology and prevention.

Finally, there was strong support for the establishment of a close partnership between the Agency and RINC in order to support the cooperation between the various organizations and promote the integration of IARC’s activities in Latin America with national and regional initiatives.

The Director of IARC, Dr Christopher Wild, speaking at the end of the meeting said: “This has been an excellent opportunity for our Agency to listen to the priorities of colleagues in Latin America and to plan how to work side by side in future to reduce the burden of cancer falling on people across the region. The UN political declaration in 2011 on noncommunicable diseases represents an historic moment, opening wide a window of opportunity to cancer leaders. We now need to be bold in applying our professional expertise and opinion to support the political agenda. In this respect, I have been greatly impressed by the commitment expressed and the determination to bring about change through leadership from within Latin America.”

Dr Wild announced the allocation of 100,000 \$ by IARC over the next two years to support the strengthening of collaborative activities in the key priority areas jointly identified at the meeting.

List of countries and partners participating:

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Representatives from the [Union for International Cancer Control \(UICC\)](#), the [World](#)

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Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and of the Center for Global Health of the US National Cancer Institute (CGH) also attended the meeting as observers.

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The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the World Health Organization. Its 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. If you wish your name to be removed from our press release e-mailing list, please write to com@iarc.fr.