

24 September 2020

## Fifth annual World Cancer Research Day: International collaborative research is key for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer

**Lyon, France and Madrid, Spain, 24 September 2020** – The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) today marks World Cancer Research Day. IARC, along with other leading international organizations, supports the World Cancer Research Day campaign, an annual global and multidisciplinary movement that aims to raise awareness about the importance of cancer research to increase survival, facilitate access to scientific advances from around the world, and reduce the global burden of cancer.

“Coordinating the cancer research effort among global partners and investing in cancer research has a critical role to play in the global fight against the disease,” says IARC Director Dr Elisabete Weiderpass. “We are today celebrating World Cancer Research Day together and are taking this opportunity to reiterate our support for the World Declaration for Research on Cancer and to call for collaborative research that enables progress in cancer research.”

For the fifth consecutive year, the international scientific community celebrates World Cancer Research Day on 24 September. This year, the movement focuses on the need to strengthen collaborative research to offer new perspectives and technologies that enable the acceleration of advances in cancer research.

The complexity of cancer and the heterogeneity of tumours, together with their micro-environmental and macro-environmental contexts, require a type of research in which all international efforts are coordinated to tackle a disease that poses global challenges.

Cancer is one of the main public health problems and the second most common cause of death worldwide. The cancer burden continues to grow and is expected to double by 2040. Faced with this situation, coordinated action is required that combines all international efforts with initiatives such as World Cancer Research Day, in which international entities come together to promote cancer research and to make a global call to raise awareness about the importance of cancer research by working together.

### **Research without borders and with a common goal**

With the slogan “Let’s team up for cancer research”, the 2020 campaign shows that because cancer is a disease that does not care about borders or distances, researchers should not care about them either. Researchers from around the world can work together, no matter how many kilometres separate them, as long as they have a common goal to accomplish. Therefore, a collaborative research culture is essential to address today’s cancer challenges and to accelerate the advancement of outcomes for a cancer-free future. Joining global efforts towards a common goal – controlling cancer – will enable more people to live

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without the disease and will make it possible for more and more patients to receive earlier diagnoses, respond better to treatments, and have a better quality of life during and after the illness.

### **The impact of COVID-19 on cancer research**

The second World Cancer Research Day campaign, held in 2017 with the slogan “For the future of cancer research, do not stand still”, enabled an assessment of the hypothetical impact that an interruption in cancer research would have on patients and on society in general. It was calculated that a pause in research would lead to one cancer death every 2 seconds in the world by 2030.

Three years later, after the arrival of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, cancer research has almost come to a standstill around the world. This could unleash major consequences in the near future related to a setback in research on cancer prevention and treatment. Therefore, cooperation between the world’s leading cancer research organizations has become essential, to provide all possible support to researchers and health professionals and to ensure the well-being of people with cancer. Although the emergence of COVID-19 may harm cancer research, which is a priority, in this year’s World Cancer Research Day campaign the different entities have shown their commitment to helping in this global public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) and to continue working to improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients with or without COVID-19.

### **Note to Editors:**

### **World Cancer Research Day**

Officially designated in 2016, World Cancer Research Day was established to support the overarching goal of the 2013 World Cancer Declaration, which called for major reductions in premature deaths from cancer, as well as improvements in quality of life and cancer survival rates.

The World Declaration for Research on Cancer aims to promote faster progress to defeat cancer by coordinating research among global partners and building on the worldwide investments in cancer research. World Cancer Research Day is the first objective of the Declaration.

This global initiative is being coordinated jointly by 10 organizations: the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the Spanish Association Against Cancer (Asociación Española Contra el Cáncer, AECC), the Italian Association for Cancer Research (Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca sul Cancro, AIRC), Cancer Research UK (CRUK), the European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the United States National Institutes of Health (NIH)–National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

<https://www.worldcancerresearchday.com>

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### **For more information, please contact**

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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 and 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 would like to be removed from our press release e-mailing list, please write to [com@iarc.fr](mailto:com@iarc.fr).