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IARC GICR launches new Collaborating Centres in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and South Africa to improve access to cancer data

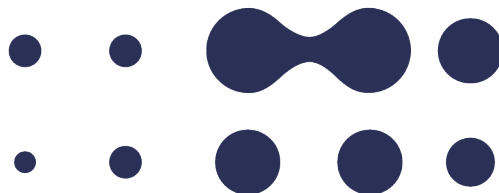
Lyon, France, 13 December 2022 – Three new Collaborating Centres established in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and South Africa aim to improve cancer registration in sub-Saharan Africa. Within the framework of the Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development (GICR), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and partners launched the inaugural IARC GICR Collaborating Centres in the region, supported by the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative, in late November and early December.

Accurate and timely cancer data are essential for countries to better understand and respond effectively to the needs of their populations. In 2020, an estimated 10 million deaths were caused by cancer globally, of which more than 700 000 occurred in Africa.

“We need data to be able to make policies that are relevant and to actually understand what are the causes of cancer in sub-Saharan Africa, so that we can be able to control it,” says Dr Mazvita Muchengeti, Senior Epidemiologist in the National Cancer Registry division of the National Health Laboratory Service in South Africa. “I am excited to be part of the team that is going to change that and provide accurate data and explore risk factors for cancers in Africa, so that our policies are relevant and they actually achieve what we want them to achieve.”

The development of the Collaborating Centres is the result of efforts to provide the benefit of cancer control by and for African countries through an exchange of strategies, experiences, and best practices, shared by experts from the respective countries to strengthen planning and cancer surveillance within the region. It also represents a collaboration between national stakeholders and international partners, including IARC, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), and the [African Cancer Registry Network \(AFCRN\)](#), as well as [Vital Strategies](#), which provides financial and programmatic support through the [Cancer Registries Program](#), a component of the Data for Health Initiative funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

“The cancer burden is rapidly increasing, and the need for better data for cancer control on the African continent has never been more urgent,” says Dr Freddie Bray, Head of the Cancer Surveillance Branch at IARC. “The IARC GICR Collaborating Centres are due recognition of the local expertise in cancer registration in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and South Africa, from which capacity in cancer registration across the region can be built.”



The newest IARC GICR Collaborating Centre was officially inaugurated on 1 December and is housed at the [Abidjan Cancer Registry](#) within the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Treichville, Côte d'Ivoire. Through the registry's technical expertise, the Collaborating Centre delivers training in best practices to collect and analyse data, and the use of IARC's [CanReg5](#) software – an open-source tool to input, store, check, and analyse cancer registry data – for all French-speaking countries in Africa.

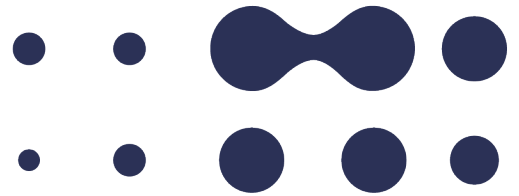
“The IARC GICR Collaborating Centres are a milestone in the continuing efforts to ensure the sustainability of population-based cancer registries through capacity-building,” says Dr Max Parkin, Coordinator of the AFCRN and a Senior Visiting Scientist at IARC. “The Collaborating Centres fulfil a primary aim of the AFCRN to enhance the quality, availability, and use of cancer data via the provision of technical assistance and support to registry staff located in 46 countries in Africa.”

The new IARC GICR Collaborating Centre housed at the Nairobi Cancer Registry within the Population Health and Surveillance Division of the [Kenya Medical Research Institute \(KEMRI\)](#) was officially inaugurated on 17 November in Nairobi, Kenya. The Collaborating Centre benefits from the registry's long-standing expertise in cancer registration and KEMRI's dedicated facilities for education. Its main focus is on providing support to African countries through regional training courses and the implementation and development of the CanReg5 software, which is used by all AFCRN members to input, store, check, and analyse population-based cancer registry data.

The new IARC GICR Collaborating Centre housed at the [South African National Cancer Registry](#) within the National Health Laboratory Service was officially inaugurated on 22 November in Johannesburg, South Africa. The National Cancer Registry has considerable technical expertise and provides African countries with support to population-based cancer registries for record linkages – which are necessary to avoid duplication within the registry database, and allow for opportunities to link to other unrelated databases (e.g., risk factors, screening) – and for registration of childhood cancer.

“Establishing these Collaborating Centres recognizes the existing data and expertise of these trail-blazing countries. Bloomberg Philanthropies is proud to support these centres to ensure that cancer registry data are impactful for countries making critical decisions on cancer control,” says Dr Jennifer Ellis, who leads the Bloomberg Philanthropies Data for Health Initiative.

“Cancer registries are a foundation for cancer control, yet these systems are chronically under-resourced in many countries,” says Dr Magdalena Paczkowski, Director of the Cancer Registries Program at Vital Strategies. “As noncommunicable diseases rise in the region's ageing population, these Collaborating Centres have a vital role to play in controlling this growing burden, by providing the data upon which cancer control planning and investments can be based. By developing and establishing a network of experts to train and provide technical expertise to others, these countries can help sustain the growth and development of expertise in cancer registration within the region.”



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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 emailing list, please write to com@iarc.fr.