Assessing the International Landscape of Cancer Research

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On April 11, 2018 the NCI Center for Research Strategy, in coordination with CGH, hosted the Annual Meeting of the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP). The meeting marked 18 years of a successful partnership, representing 124 organizations that fund cancer research projects in 145 countries. ICRP's mission is to enhance global collaboration and strategic coordination of research between individual researchers and organizations. To this purpose, ICRP connects cancer research organizations and shares funding information on its website. NCI led the renovation of the ICRP website, developing an interactive and easy-to-use database which allows partner organizations to upload data about their funded cancer research projects following the Common Scientific Outline, a classification system organized into six research areas:

- Biology;
- Etiology;
- Prevention;
- Early Detection, Diagnosis and Prognosis;
- Treatment; and
- Cancer Control, Survivorship, and Outcomes Research

The database currently contains over 174,000 projects from 6,000 research institutions, and ICRP added a new feature in 2018 — the ICRP map, which allows users to assess the global landscape of cancer research. Historically, the core of ICRP was formed by cancer research organizations based in North America, Europe, Japan, and Australia; however, the partnership is now looking for ways to expand its membership to more countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that have strong cancer research portfolios.

The 2018 ICRP meeting (#ICRP2018) was a great opportunity for partners to network and strategize about future priorities, while assessing any underfunded areas in cancer research. Michelle Bennett, PhD, director of NCI-Center for Research Strategy, and Katherine McKenzie, PhD, from the California Breast Cancer Research Program and ICRP chair, welcomed participants and

introduced ICRP's history and objectives. The agenda was filled with excellent talks, including keynote remarks by Doug Lowy, MD, who highlighted the importance of international collaboration to achieve our common goal of defeating cancer, and discussed our successes and remaining challenges in HPV prevention and screening.

Participants joined presenters from NCI, Union for International Cancer Control, Cancer Australia, American Cancer Society, Melanoma Research Alliance, Breast Cancer Research Foundation, the American Society for Radiation Oncology, and Susan G. Komen in addressing overlooked areas in cancer research, and discussing innovative joint funding models for international collaboration. Presentations by The National Natural Science Foundation of China and the Indian Council of Medical Research gave the audience a flavor of cancer research in Asia.

Lynne Davies, PhD, ICRP operations manager, shared results of a 10-year trend analysis of cancer research projects available in the ICRP database. Findings suggested that certain types of cancer are inadequately funded in relation to their global burden. Cervical cancer, for example, is an important disease for low- and middle-income countries where 85 of deaths occur, yet is underfunded in relation to its incidence and mortality rates worldwide. The day closed with an excellent presentation by Otis Brawley, MD, from the American Cancer Society, describing the advances and challenges in cancer research, prevention and control in the United States, and the plans for a national 'Cancer Blueprint,' which would unify our country's strategy for cancer control.

CGH will continue to participate in the work of ICRP, and support the partnership's intent to increase the geographic representation of cancer funders to improve the accuracy of the global status of cancer research. Check out the ICRP website and follow us on Twitter. We are looking forward to welcoming many more partners to join us for activities in 2019!

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