

# BIENNIAL REPORT



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## 2014–2015

INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER

LYON, FRANCE

2015

ISBN 978-92-832-1101-3  
ISSN 0250-8613

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## INTRODUCTION



Dr Christopher Wild. © Jason Harris.

I AM PLEASED TO PRESENT THIS BIENNIAL REPORT, WHICH PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH ON CANCER (IARC) OVER THE PERIOD 2014–2015. THIS HAS BEEN A HISTORIC PERIOD, MARKING 50 YEARS SINCE THE CREATION OF THE ORGANIZATION IN 1965.

Several events marked the 50th anniversary, starting with a celebration at the City Hall in Lyon on 15 May 2015 in the presence of Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Salma of Morocco, Her Royal Highness Princess Dina Mired of Jordan, and Mr Gérard Collomb, Mayor of Lyon, Senator, and President of the Lyon Métropole, together with other dignitaries. Agency personnel were joined by former IARC staff members as well as colleagues and collaborators from the city and region, and from across France and worldwide. The celebration was the occasion to launch a new publication, *International Agency for Research on Cancer: The First 50 Years, 1965–2015*, which charts the creation of IARC and the Agency's activities over the past five decades.

The 50th anniversary also marked a turning point in relation to several other key aspects of the Agency's future. The Governing Council adopted the IARC Medium-Term Strategy for 2016–2020, which is built on three major themes: describing the occurrence of cancer, understanding the causes, and evaluating preventive interventions and their implementation. Training new generations of cancer researchers remains as a core responsibility. Catalysing international collaboration is an underlying principle that is as relevant today as ever before.

In addition, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, notably integrating laboratory science into epidemiological research, continue to grow. The 50th anniversary also coincided with a major commitment from the local and national governments of our host country, France, to provide a new, purpose-built centre for the Agency, confirming its presence in Lyon for the coming decades. Morocco became the first country from the African continent to join IARC as a Participating State, a further important step in expanding the geographical representation on the Governing Council as the demands on the Agency continue to grow along with the increasing cancer burden globally.

Fifty years on from 1965, IARC is an internationally recognized centre of excellence, respected and appreciated for its mission, its research, its independence, its leadership, and its cooperation. While some core commitments have remained, the Agency has constantly adapted to the changing knowledge about cancer and the evolving international cancer research landscape. Its unique role as the cancer agency of the World Health Organization (WHO) provides the foundation both to conduct novel research and to produce the authoritative evidence base for cancer control, which is provided by programmes such as the IARC Monographs, the IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, the

WHO Classification of Tumours, and the global cancer statistics contained in *Cancer Incidence in Five Continents* and GLOBOCAN. The Agency's overall research portfolio has increasing relevance to policy, with implementation research becoming a theme across a number of the research Sections.

The current Report presents a spectrum of research contributing in different ways to cancer control. It is an ambitious programme in line with the ambitions expressed in the new IARC Medium-Term Strategy. However, through the list of collaborators recorded herein, the Report reveals the secret of how IARC is able to achieve so much with so little: by joining with the international cancer research community to achieve common goals.

Generosity in collaboration, working in partnership with others as equals, is surely one major reason why there remains a strong desire of scientists across the world to work with IARC. Coupled with excellent science, this is a powerful model for success – through cooperation rather than competition, through emphasis on the group rather than the individual. That much has not changed over the past 50 years and is unlikely to over the next 50.

The Agency's year of celebrations will conclude with a major scientific conference in Lyon on 7–10 June 2016, structured around the main areas of IARC's research strategy: Global Cancer: Occurrence, Causes, and Avenues to Prevention. This conference will serve to launch the next phase of IARC's work.

In addition, it will feature the IARC "50 for 50" initiative, whereby the Agency will invite 50 future leaders in cancer research from low- and middle-income countries to attend the conference and participate in an associated programme of leadership training. We hope this will be an additional legacy of the vision shown by the leaders who, 50 years ago, had the foresight to create an international cancer agency to "fight for life".

I commend the work of all IARC personnel to you and trust that the contents of this Biennial Report provide a clear illustration of the value of the Agency's research as it seeks to fulfil its mission to reduce the global burden of cancer.