

# WHO and Cancer Research

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# Overview

- Cancer control needs
- Cancer research gaps
- WHO's global cancer control and research strategies: new perspectives in cancer research

# What is cancer research?

- Epidemiological research: descriptive/analytic burden and risks
- Public health research: policy analysis
- Community and behavioral research:
  - what changes level of exposure?
  - what determines access to care?
- Clinical research: treatment



# Cancer control needs: evidence

- Prevention: >**policies, community actions, behavioural changes**
- Early detection: (BC, CX ...) interface between population approaches and health care system
- Treatment: >**health system strengthening** (secondary/tertiary care level)
- Palliative care: **skills, medicines, structures**
- Monitoring: cancer registry infrastructure

# What we know and what we don't know

- Most causes of cancer are well known: behavioural, carcinogens, infections (IARC and others)
- However, prevention research is scarce.
- Cancer treatment research >90% in high income countries, however, what works in LMC?
- Palliative care is known to be effective but implementation research is mostly missing.

# WHO Cancer Research Priorities

## Position paper (2010)

- Prevention: translational research (policy analysis, behavioral research) what works in reducing risks?
- Early detection: screening tests, access, quality control referral systems.
- Treatment: multi modal treatment regimens adapted to low resource settings
- Palliative care: morphine availability, implementation research

# Successful translation of cancer research into policies and programmes:

## WHO Cancer Prevention Strategies

- Tobacco (IARC monographs): > Framework Convention Tobacco Control, EMPOWER tool,
- Diet (IARC: EPIC study): Global Strategy on Diet and Physical Activity
- Infections: HBV/HPV > vaccines > implementation

# Cancer Research at WHO: a mapping exercise

- IARC: defined research agenda
- WHO programmes with research components:  
RHR, IVR
- Collaborating centers ( e. g. DKFZ, Wisconsin pain policy CC)
- Emerging Partnerships
  - WHO - NIH/NCI,
  - IARC and various NCIs



# IARC research agenda

- Epidemiology of cancer (cancer registries, Globocan CI5C)
- Classification of cancer ("blue books") in close link to WHO ICD
- Causes of cancer: monograph program
- Cancer screening
- Fellowship program
- Resources: Participating States, Research Grants

# WHO programmes with research components

- Reproductive Health and Research program (RHR)
  - Cervical cancer screening: 6 country project
  - Screening in HIV
- Immunization research program (IVR): HPV pre-qualification and position paper (SAGE)
- Resources: WHO, Member States, partnership with UNFPA, PEPFAR, CDC/US

# Complementarity of IARC and WHO research

- IARC: fundamental research (causes, burden, classification) and increasingly applied research (screening)
- WHO: implementation research accompanying policies and strategies (what works?)

# Research as part of the NCD agenda

- NCD action plan 2008
  - Position paper NCD/cancer research priorities
  - Objective 4:
- UN High Level Meeting Outcome paper: Research integral part
- NCD action plan 2013 under development

# Future perspectives

- Research challenges of the global NCD agenda with regard to cancer:
  - What works in low and middle income countries?
  - How to link global targets to national monitoring systems (cancer registries) and related interventions to achieve the targets ?
  - How to achieve the 25/25 Goal?