



International Agency for Research on Cancer
Centre International de Recherche sur le Cancer

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Joint meeting at IARC on Infections and Cancer

Infections and cancer :

The CLARA cluster brings together researchers at IARC

The link between certain viruses and cancer onset, recently highlighted by the 2008 Nobel Prize for Medicine award, will be central to the European congress held by the Lyon Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Cancer Research Cluster (CLARA), on 23-24 January 2009 at the international Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in Lyon. It will bring together specialists from two international research facilities – the IARC and the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DFKZ) in Germany – as well as two French research clusters, the Cancéropôle Grand-Est (CGE) and CLARA.



Cross-border and inter-cluster collaboration on infectiology and cancer

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, the DFKZ and the Grand-Est and Rhône-Alpes-Auvergne cancer research clusters, are coming together for the Joint Meeting on Infections and Cancer on 23-24 January 2009, to be held at the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

The event will gather many virologists to address the role of infectious agents in cancer onset. The meeting is intended to pool the efforts of research institutes and networks in order to more quickly achieve their shared objectives: improved diagnosis and treatment, and the prevention of virus-induced cancers.

This meeting is a first. An initiative of the Lyon Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Cancer Research Cluster (CLARA), it is taking place thanks to the coordinated efforts of two international research centres –the IARC and Germany's Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum (DFKZ) – together with two French cancer research clusters.

This multi-agency meeting features a full range of competencies that spans the discipline: whereas the CGE cluster and the DFKZ focus on the human papillomavirus (see below), CLARA is dedicated to all infections associated with cancer in humans.

The meeting will address the following main topics:

- virus-induced cancer diagnosis and therapy;
- molecular mechanisms in carcinogenesis;
- viral strategies to escape immune response.

Infections and cancer: a major research avenue for prevention

Roughly 20% of cancers worldwide are induced by infectious agents. This proportion is even higher in low-resource countries, as the socio-economic context makes infectious conditions more widespread. As part of its epidemiological and biological studies, the International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified six viruses* associated with the origin of certain types of cancer: Epstein-Barr virus (EBV); Kaposi sarcoma associated herpesvirus / human herpesvirus 8 (KSHV/HHV8); human papillomavirus (HPV); hepatitis B virus (HBV); hepatitis C virus (HCV); and human T-lymphotropic virus type 1 (HTLV-1), as well as the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*).

HPVs are high-risk etiological agents in the cervix, responsible for about 5% of all virus-induced cancers. Every year, they cause the death of about 250,000 women worldwide, most of whom live in low-resource countries.

A new infectious agent was recently isolated: the human polyomavirus (MCV), which appears to be associated with a rare tumour, Merkel cell carcinoma.

Viruses are widespread in the population, and persistent (chronic) infection affecting a minority of individuals causes cancer to develop. As yet, little is known about infection persistence factors, and identifying them is key to preventing the disease.

The collaboration of the leading actors in this field is therefore acquiring crucial importance, and the *Joint Meeting on Infections and Cancer* on 23-24 January 2009 is a vehicle for its operational implementation.

About DFKZ

The task of the Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum in Heidelberg (German Cancer Research Center, DKFZ) is to systematically investigate the mechanisms of cancer development and to identify cancer risk factors. The results of this basic research are expected to lead to new approaches in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. The Center is financed to 90 percent by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and to 10 percent by the State of Baden-Wuerttemberg. It is a member of the Helmholtz Association of National Research Centers (Helmholtz-Gemeinschaft Deutscher Forschungszentren e.V.).

<http://www.dkfz.de>

About IARC

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is part of the [World Health Organization](#).

IARC's 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.

<http://www.iarc.fr>

About CLARA

The Cancéropôle Lyon Auvergne Rhône-Alpes (Lyon Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Cancer Research Cluster, CLARA) is a publicly launched and funded initiative that is part of France's National Cancer Plan and is geared to developing cancer research in the Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne regions. It unites academic, clinical and industrial actors in the two regions to drive a regional, national and international strategy against cancer. In particular, CLARA helps to build partnerships between manufacturers and academic and clinical research laboratories in order to promote technology transfers and thus benefit patients. CLARA aims to position the Rhône-Alpes and Auvergne regions as Europe's pace-setting location in the fight against cancer.

<http://www.canceropole-clara.com>

About the CGE

The Cancéropôle Grand-Est (Greater Eastern Cancer Research Cluster, CGE) combines more than 150 research teams focused on a single goal: in partnership with other European teams, it develops international-class, competitive and innovative research in the fight against cancer. In total, more than 900 researchers and clinicians pool their efforts so that the seven million inhabitants of the "Greater East" multi-region belt of France can benefit from their research as quickly as possible.

<http://www.canceropole-ge.org/>

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