

13 May 2015

Morocco joins the International Agency for Research on Cancer

Lyon, France, 13 May 2015 - The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the World Health Organization's specialized cancer agency, is pleased to welcome Morocco as a new Participating State.

Morocco today becomes the 25th country to join IARC and is, notably, the first IARC Participating State from the African continent. This represents a significant opportunity to expand on the long-standing research collaborations in Morocco, and to develop active partnerships with other cancer research organizations in the region.

"Morocco has shown remarkable leadership in making cancer a major public health priority. By becoming an IARC Participating State, Morocco shows its commitment to bringing our collaboration to a new level and takes its full place as a key player in international cancer research and prevention," said IARC Director Dr Christopher Wild.

Morocco's membership as a Participating State follows years of collaboration between IARC, the [Lalla Salma Foundation](#), and the Ministry of Health, which work closely together to strengthen the country's cancer research and cancer prevention and control capacity. The stronger collaboration will further enhance several ongoing joint research projects on early detection and prevention of cancer.

Strategic areas of collaboration include technical support in the monitoring and evaluation of screening programmes for cervical cancer, capacity building such as training on colposcopy and the management of precancerous cervical lesions, and support in the development and implementation of quality-assurance programmes and cancer registration.

In Morocco, cancer is the second most common cause of premature death¹, and cancer incidence is forecast to rise by almost 60% between 2012 and 2030². The country is currently facing a "double burden", with high rates of infection-related cancers and an increase in cancers associated with reproductive, dietary, and hormonal risk factors.

Created in 2005 at the initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Salma, the Lalla Salma Foundation jointly coordinates the development and implementation of Morocco's national cancer control programmes in partnership with the Ministry of Health. The Foundation plays a strategic role in the early detection and treatment programme for breast and cervical cancers. It is also involved in cancer awareness campaigns as well as programmes providing access to free treatment for patients with limited financial resources. The Foundation has also demonstrated the importance of the environment in which cancer patients receive care, through the creation of the "Houses of Life".

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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 e-mailing list, please write to com@iarc.fr.

¹ World Health Organization: Noncommunicable diseases country profiles 2014, Morocco. Available from: http://www.who.int/nmh/countries/mar_en.pdf.

² Ferlay J, Soerjomataram I, Ervik M, et al. GLOBOCAN 2012 v1.0, Cancer Incidence and Mortality Worldwide: IARC CancerBase No. 11 [Internet]. Available from: <http://globocan.iarc.fr>.