

PRESS RELEASE
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NCRI

National
Cancer
Research
Institute

NEW BIOBANK CONFEDERATION WILL BOOST CANCER RESEARCH IN THE UK

A NEW consortium of banks that store biological samples for cancer research was announced today (Tuesday) at the National Cancer Research Institute conference in Birmingham.

The Confederation of Cancer Biobanks (CCB) will tackle many of the problems currently hampering cancer research using human samples. At present, some of the most pressing research questions cannot be answered using samples from a single bank, as the numbers available are too small. And combining samples from more than one bank can generate misleading results as the methods they use to prepare and preserve samples can differ.

Archives of tumour tissue, blood and other samples from the body are fast becoming the cornerstone of cancer research – especially in translational studies looking at the effects of potential new treatments. The CCB will work towards the adoption of common policies and standard methods, which will accelerate research into the causes and treatment of cancer.

Dr Brian Clark, chief executive of founding member onCore UK, said: "The Confederation of Cancer Biobanks will greatly boost cancer research in the UK.

"It will lead, for the first time in this country, to the use of common standards for the custodianship of the precious cancer tissues that patients donate. Also, by providing access to larger numbers of high quality samples, the CCB will make possible many important research studies that have historically been difficult to carry out."

The CCB will provide assurance to organisations funding cancer research that resources are being managed in a consistent and effective manner.

Whilst retaining independent identities and management, members will work towards a harmonised approach to the collection, storage and access of biological samples. They will agree upon common ethical and legal principles and policies for the operation of member biobanks. And to avoid duplication of effort and unnecessary competition, members will share resources and information and pursue the co-development of a common web-based portal for researchers seeking access to samples.

The CCB has arisen following discussions between the Tayside Tissue Bank, the Glasgow Biobank, the Wales Cancer Bank and onCore UK. Membership, however, will be open to any institution managing a cancer tissue bank willing and able to work to the commonly agreed principles and practices of the CCB. The intention is to be as inclusive as possible to create an extensive network of tumour banks across the UK.

Derek Stewart, chairman of the CCB working group and a cancer patient, said: "It's a case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. By working together the precious donations of many individual patients to these banks will be able to make a greater difference to the fight against cancer."

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Tayside Tissue Bank

The Tayside Tissue Bank is funded jointly by Cancer Research UK and the National Translational Cancer Research Network and aims to apply molecular biological and pathological techniques in the analysis of clinical tissue specimens. The primary role of the bank is to consent, collect, log and store frozen tumour/normal tissues for use in approved research projects. The bank has been in operation since 1997 and now has an extensive collection of tissue and blood samples from various tumour types. Histological, immunocytochemical and molecular services are also provided.

The Glasgow Biobank

The Wales Cancer Bank

onCore UK is the newly founded national cancer tissue bank in the UK. It is a not-for-profit company and registered charity established to provide high quality cancer tissue samples, coupled to anonymous patient information, for research to discover new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

onCore UK is independent of the research community. It sits within the strategic umbrella of the National Cancer Research Initiative, and is co-funded by the Department of Health, the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK.

About the NCRI:

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a partnership between government, the voluntary sector and the private sector, with the primary mission of maximising patient benefit that accrues from cancer research in the UK through coordination of effort and joint planning towards an integrated national strategy for cancer research. www.ncri.org.uk

The NCRI consists of: The Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); The Association for International Cancer Research; The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research Fund; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; The Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services Research & Development Office; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Executive Health Department; Tenovus; Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care; Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

AstraZeneca is the gold sponsor for the NCRI Cancer Conference 2006.