Occupational Cancer Research Centre

IARC Carcinogen Classification Workshop

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

Background

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is a specialized agency of the World Health Organization (WHO) based in Lyon, France. Established in 1965 after a WHO World Health Assembly meeting, IARC is supported by contributions by its member countries. Initially, the founding member countries included: Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. However, membership today extends to countries such as: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, India, Ireland, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

The IARC Monograph Program

In 1971, IARC began a program to evaluate the carcinogenicity of various substances and produced monographs to document this evidence. Now known as the *Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans,* these are one of the best known products published by IARC. To produce these monographs, IARC generally organizes three meetings annually where expert working groups evaluate a predetermined selection of related substances and subsequently draft the monograph. While some of the monograph's program funding is from IARC, the majority is from the U.S. National Cancer Institute, the European Commission Directorate-General of Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Other IARC Activities

IARC is the primary source for worldwide cancer related statistics, in part by coordinating international tumour registries and providing them with technical assistance. As a result, IARC is able to monitor geographic trends and ensure the registries produce comparable statistics. IARC also promotes international interdisciplinary collaborative cancer research in areas such as biostatistics, epidemiology and laboratory work. With regards to laboratory work, IARC coordinated the development of a Biobank containing over 10 million samples, which are used in the innovation of laboratory based techniques that help with early tumour detection.