

13 May 2011

Turkey Joins International Agency for Research on Cancer

Lyon, France — At its yearly Governing Council meeting on 13 May 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the specialized cancer research agency of the World Health Organization, welcomed Turkey as its 22nd Participating State. In addition to Turkey having a role in the governance of IARC as a Participating State, Turkish cancer researchers will have exciting opportunities to participate in international collaborations aimed at reducing the cancer burden worldwide.

According to Professor P. Puska, Chairman of IARC's Governing Council, "The admission of Turkey as IARC's first Participating State in the region east of the Mediterranean sends a strong signal that cancer research is highly relevant to that part of the world."

While Turkey's population is young, with over half the population under 30 years of age, its population growth rate is 1.31, and cancer, with 95 000 new cases a year, has become the country's leading public health problem. The pattern of cancer in Turkey is a mix of that of developing and developed countries. Cancer incidence in Turkey is substantially higher in men than in women (incidence 275 and 165 per 100 000, respectively); lung and prostate cancers are the most common cancers in men, and breast cancer is the most common in women. It is estimated that if effective measures are not implemented, by 2030 cancer-related expenditures in Turkey will double, and 1.3 million people will be afflicted with cancer.

"In view of the steady increase in cancer incidence rates observed in the last decade and of its changing population demographics, Turkey has accelerated its cancer control activities," said Professor Murat Tuncer, Turkey's first IARC Governing Council Representative. "We value the work being carried out at IARC very much, and look forward to multiple collaborations."

Dr Christopher Wild, Director of the Agency, expressed his satisfaction "that such an important country, as a natural bridge between two continents, Asia and Europe, now joins efforts with IARC in our struggle against cancer. We look forward to further strengthening the research collaborations with Turkish scientists in the coming years."

For more information, please contact

Dr Nicolas Gaudin, IARC Communications com@iarc.fr (+33 472 738 478)

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.