



International
Cancer Genome
Consortium

ICGC releases new genomic data on cancer ahead of schedule

Toronto – July 11, 2011. The International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) today announced its sixth major data release at a meeting in Kyoto, Japan. The ICGC also announced that it is ahead of schedule in its decade-long goal to generate high-quality genomic data on more than 25,000 tumours for up to 50 types of cancer that are of clinical and societal importance across the globe.

“These new and updated datasets will help researchers better understand what drives cancer, which in turn should help develop new insights into how to tackle this terrible disease. Ultimately, this will lead to new, more personalized treatments that will improve patient care,” said Dr. Tom Hudson, President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research and one of the founders of the ICGC. “As a result, these datasets are an important contribution not just to the ICGC but to the cancer research community worldwide.”

The ICGC, comprised of research organizations around the world, is committed to making data rapidly and freely available. Cancer genome data is available on more than 2,800 tumours through an Internet portal at www.icgc.org.

The data include new submissions to the ICGC from The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) in the United States, which has contributed information on about 10 types of cancer affecting the blood, brain, colon, kidney, lung, ovaries, rectum, and uterus, including data from a study of 500 ovarian cancer patients published in the journal *Nature* on June 30.

The National Cancer Center/RIKEN in Japan has updated its whole genome data on 27 liver cancers, which includes the first whole genome sequence data of HCV-positive HCC published in *Nature Genetics* on April 17. Researchers from Spain have provided complete genome sequences for patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). The Spanish team described recurrent mutations in CLL in a publication in *Nature* on June 5. The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research in Canada has updated its data on pancreatic cancer. The ICGC data portal also includes information on breast, lung, and skin cancer provided by researchers from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in the United Kingdom.

More than 140 ICGC researchers are meeting at the first ICGC Workshop to be held in Asia. From July 10 to 12, the researchers meeting in Kyoto will discuss what has been discovered so far and to develop strategies for the future direction of the Consortium. Dr. Harold Varmus, Nobel laureate, is presenting a plenary lecture at this Workshop.

“The relationship between the United States’ TCGA initiative and the ICGC project is synergistic and will make major progress toward understanding the genetic underpinnings of more than 30 types of human cancer,” said Harold Varmus, MD, Director of the U.S. National Cancer Institute. “An international commitment, both financially and intellectually, to an understanding of how human cancers occur across different populations will mean important progress for global health.”

Although some projects targeting specific forms of cancer are already at the data generation stage, many of the 40 active projects are in their initial stages and are focused on obtaining patient consent and collecting 500 or more tumours of a specific form of cancer. The Consortium has proven to be very effective in generating guidelines and sharing knowledge to accelerate both existing and new projects in meeting their objectives.

The ICGC, which was formally launched in November 2008, continues to grow and attract new member projects. There currently are 40 projects underway targeting the bladder, blood, bone, brain, breast, cervix, colon, head and neck, kidney, liver, lung, oral cavity, ovary, pancreas, prostate, rectum, skin, soft tissues, stomach, and uterus.

Current ICGC funding member organizations include:

Australia	National Health & Medical Research Council; Cancer Council New South Wales; Garvan Institute of Medical Research; Queensland State Government; Institute for Molecular Bioscience, University of Queensland;
Canada	Canada Foundation for Innovation; Genome Canada; Ontario Institute for Cancer Research; Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation; Prostate Cancer Canada
China	Chinese Cancer Genome Consortium; Ministry of Science and Technology; National High Technology Research and Development Program ("863" Program) of China; Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (Observer Status)
European Union	European Commission
France	Institut National du Cancer (INCa)
Germany	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF); German Cancer Aid (DKT)
India	Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology
Italy	Italian Ministry of Education University and Research; University of Verona
Japan	National Cancer Center; National Institute of Biomedical Innovation; RIKEN
Mexico	Instituto Carlos Slim de la Salud
Spain	Institute of Health Carlos III; Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation
United Kingdom	Bone Cancer Research Trust; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Cancer Research UK; EuroBoNeT; Kay Kendall Leukaemia Fund; Skeletal Cancer Action Trust (Scat); The Wellcome Trust; Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute
USA	National Cancer Institute; National Human Genome Research Institute; National Institutes of Health

The ICGC enables free, rapid access to data. Data are available through the ICGC Data Coordination Centre housed in Toronto, Canada and through ICGC data portals in the Barcelona Supercomputing Center in Spain and the Queensland Centre for Medical Genomics in Australia.

For more information and updates about ICGC activities, please visit the website at: www.icgc.org.

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