

# UICC-Japan and UICC-ARO Host International Session at Annual Meeting of the Japanese Cancer Association



Hybrid meeting held in the city of Hiroshima in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the atomic bombing discusses the key role of data in supporting cancer care in Asia

(October 3, 2020) The Japan National Committee for UICC (UICC-Japan; Executive Chair: Dr. Tetsuo Noda) and UICC-Asia Regional Office (UICC-ARO) hosted a special international session at the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Japanese Cancer Association. Due to the impact of COVID-19 the meeting was held in a hybrid format, with international participants participating virtually online, including the session Co-Chair and President of UICC, HRH Princess Dina Mired.

With the cancer care frontline in Asia facing severe challenges due to the expanding COVID-19 crisis, and the need to take a long-term perspective in creating self-sustaining mechanisms that will ensure UHC for cancer care into the future, participants gathered in the city of Hiroshima and online to discuss how best to realize UHC and ensure no-one is left behind. The particular focus for the session was the key importance of data and its growing importance in a post-COVID-19 world. UICC-ARO has been a consistent supporter of cancer registries and data sharing among Asian countries and the meeting sought to discuss the kinds of data that can best help support UHC for cancer care, considering case studies from Japan and Malaysia, and also highlighting the key importance of public-private partnerships. The session was co-chaired by HRH Princess Dina Mired, Dr. Wataru Yasui (Hiroshima University) and Dr. Kazuhiro Yoshida (Gifu University).

The poster for the international session includes the following details:

- Title:** What kinds of data could help support UHC for cancer care in Asia in a COVID-19 world?
- Date:** Day 3 October 3 (Sat) 9:00 - 11:30am (Japan Time)
- Place:** Hotel MELPARQUE Hiroshima 6/F., Room Zuiun 1
- Chairpersons:**
  - HRH Princess Dina Mired, President for UICC for International Cancer Control
  - Dr. Wataru Yasui, Department of Molecular Pathology, Graduate School of Biomedical and Health Sciences, Hiroshima University
  - Dr. Kazuhiro Yoshida, Department of Surgical Oncology, Gifu University
- Speakers:**
  - IS 10-1:** Opening Remarks / UICC and Universal Health Coverage. Speaker: HRH Princess Dina Mired.
  - IS 10-2:** Provision as an effective means to ensuring a future for UHC. Speaker: Dr. Saunthari Somasundaram, National Cancer Society Malaysia.
  - IS 10-3:** Current status of Asian cancer registries and future challenges. Speaker: Dr. Tomohiro Matsuda, National Cancer Center, Center for Cancer Control and Information Services.
  - IS 10-4:** Challenges facing UHC for cancer care in Asia from the perspective of the ACTION Study. Speaker: Dr. Nirmala Bhoo-Pathy, Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya.
  - IS 10-5:** What Canon Medical Systems Can Contribute in Realizing UHC. Speaker: Mr. Toshio Takiguchi, CANON MEDICAL SYSTEMS CORPORATION.
  - IS 10-6:** Possible commitment of Japanese pathologists in Asian oncology network for UHC. Speaker: Dr. Haruhiko Sugimura, Hamamatsu University School of Medicine, Department of Tumor Pathology.

Opening the session, Dr. Yasui reminded participants that the host city Hiroshima is commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombing in 2020 and reiterated the determination of the organizers to realize world peace and a world free from nuclear weapons.

In opening remarks Princess Dina Mired noted how the pandemic has brought new international focus to the importance of health as a key contributor to national safety and the urgent need for resilient health systems. Stating that COVID-19 has reminded us all to go back to the basics, she highlighted that data is a critical component for supporting UHC and that UICC-ARO has been a consistent supporter of data registries. Data must span the full spectrum of cancer control, from prevention to detection, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care and be supported by national cancer control plans, all of which requires political will and the determination of governments working with other stakeholders.

Dr. Saunthari Somasundaram (National Cancer Society Malaysia) shared Malaysia's experiences of providing cancer care during the COVID-19 pandemic when the country was placed under a movement control order (MCO). She reported that all patients had experienced delays in diagnosis, treatment or other services due to the impact of COVID-19, and there is a need for command and control centers to be established in order to respond to pandemic situations in the future. She highlighted the crucial importance of data as a key enabler for cancer patients on their cancer journey.

Dr. Tomohiro Matsuda (National Cancer Center, Japan) shared information on the current status of Asian cancer registries, noting that there is tremendous variance in the quality and volume of data available in the countries of Asia. Referring to international initiatives to promote cancer registries, such as the International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) Global Initiative for Cancer Registry Development (GICR), he

noted that database linkage could be a game-changing solution and that it is essential to advance cross-border initiatives.

Dr. Nirmala Bhoo-Pathy (University of Malaya) reported on the outcomes of the ACTION Study, a longitudinal cohort study of 9,513 patients with a first time diagnosis of cancer in eight countries in Southeast Asia. The main outcome of the study was financial catastrophe for patients and their families across all countries. The study also highlights the critical importance of country-specific data for policy making purposes and any future study would ideally have higher data granularity.

Mr. Toshio Takiguchi (Canon Medical Systems Corporation) provided information on Canon Medical's initiatives to improve the efficiency of medical services and provide accurate care to patients. He noted that in terms of solutions for the treatment of patients with cancer as they apply to the goal of achieving UHC, in addition to improving diagnostics, it is important to raise the level of all healthcare services throughout the patient journey. He also stressed the importance of promoting social awareness, noting that industry, governments, and academia must work together to promote social awareness of the available technologies and to publish and distribute educational materials that people can easily understand.

Dr. Haruhiko Sugimura (Hamamatsu University) presented on the potential for an Asian oncology network for UHC from the perspective of pathology. He noted that disease profiles in Southeast Asia are converging towards the situation in Japan and regional and international networks could be created using telepathology and AI-assisted pathology in the future.

The international session was a timely opportunity to concentrate minds and attention on the need for data and enhanced international linkage, both to overcome the immediate challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and also for the realization of UHC in Asia in the future, in a way that involves all stakeholders.