

International Cancer Research Commission*

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This Commission will promote cooperation in cancer research throughout the world. It will therefore supply the mechanism for teamwork which, though widely needed, has hitherto been halting and without organization. As now established, the Commission is the first international group devoted exclusively to research on cancer. This activity is broadly conceived to include clinical, laboratory and statistical investigations, indeed all efforts to expand knowledge of this disease to the end that improvements will be made on a large scale in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Systematically to bring in cancer workers of all nations is clearly indicated. With different cultural backgrounds and different habits of mind, they may well view the same problem from different angles and try to solve it in different ways.

FORMATION

Conditions were especially favorable for the birth of the Commission at the International Cancer Research Congress held in St. Louis, September 2 to 7, 1947. The Congress was sponsored by the Union Internationale Contre le Cancer and by the American Association for Cancer Research. The attendance from abroad was further increased by the action of the United States Department of State in transmitting invitations to foreign governments to send official delegates. The time was ripe for such a meeting, because we are entering a period of almost worldwide reconstruction. Cancer facilities destroyed in the war must be rebuilt and enlarged. Investigations interrupted must be resumed and new researches started with greater hope of success. Obviously it is advantageous to take up this fight for light on the mysteries of cancer armed with full knowledge of what others have accomplished in the war years and plan now to do. It is also important to utilize the most effective apparatus which has become available. Then, too, secrecy is being lifted from scientific discoveries made in researches bearing on the war. Information about these may help to shape cancer research problems. The eagerness of those attending the Congress to spare no pains in the overcoming of obstacles was

matched by their determination to pool their resources and go forward together.

President Truman, in his opening message to the Congress, said: "This meeting has large significance to the United States and to the world at large from every point of view—social, economic, political and spiritual. No further argument is needed to support such a statement than the fact that in the United States alone 180,000 persons die annually of cancer. The last war showed more clearly than ever before the value of coordinated research. How fruitful, therefore, will be this assembly from the whole world of scholars interested in the solution of the cancer problem."

In a later telegram the President advised the Congress "that it is now possible for the United States to take an important forward step toward greater international cooperation in the field of medical and biological research. On behalf of the people of the United States I am pleased to announce to the Fourth International Cancer Research Congress that progress in the production of radioisotopes by the United States Atomic Energy Commission now permits limited distribution to qualified research workers in other countries of radioisotopes principally for medical and biological research. I know that the representatives of the United States attending the cancer research congress share my hope that the open, impartial and truly international character of medical research will carry over into the realm of other problems of world concern. The sharing by and among all nations of both the means and the results of cancer research will reduce the loss of life and human suffering from disease throughout the world."

With such encouragement and with deepest personal feelings of the urgency of the cancer problem, the Congress set to work framing suggestions for international cooperation. Within a very short space of time history was made in the creation of the International Cancer Research Commission consisting of a single representative of the following nations attending the Congress:

Argentina: JUAN ESTEBAN PESSANO, Tucum6n 1694, Buenos Aires.

Australia: R. KAYE-SCOTT, 105 Collins St. Melbourne.

Belgium: J. MAISIN, University of Louvain, Louvain.

* Because of absence, the author has not read proof of this article.

- Bolivia*: HECTOR FERNANDEZ FERRUFINO, Hnos. Macheo No. 908, La Paz.
- Brazil*: ANTONIO PRUDENTE, Benjamin Constant 171, Sao Paulo.
- Canada*: G. E. RICHARDS, Ontario Cancer Treatment & Research Foundation, Toronto.
- Chile*: A. RAHAUSEN, Dept. of Experimental Medicine, Avenida Irarrazaval 849, Santiago.
- China*: TU-SHAN JUNG, Dept. of Radiology, Peking Union Medical College, Peking.
- Columbia*: RUBEN A. GARCIA, Instituto del Radium, Bogota.
- Czechoslovakia*: H. SIKL, Dept. of Pathology, University Charles IV, Prague.
- Denmark*: J. ENGELBRETH-HOLM, Universitetets Patologisk-Anatomiske Institut, Frederik V.s Vej 11, Copenhagen.
- Duchy of Luxembourg*: SIMON HERTZ, c/o Nathan Hertz, Grand 'rue et rue du Fosse, Luxembourg.
- Egypt*: JOSEF N. AZZOUNI, St. Mary's Hospital Group, 1325 S. Grand Ave., St. Louis, Mo. (acting for Official Delegate).
- El Salvador*: DON RICARDO POSADA, Universidad de el Salvador, San Salvador.
- France*: A. LACASSAGNE, Laboratoire de Biologie, Institut de Radium de l'Universite de Paris, Due d'Ulm 26, Paris.
- Great Britain*: ALEXANDER HADDOW, Royal Cancer Hospital, Fulham Road, London, SW3.
- Greece*: EFSTATHIOS G. MINOPOULOS, Director General, Athens Anti-Cancer Institute, Athens.
- India*: VASSONT R. KHANOLKAR, Director of Laboratories, Tata Memorial Hospital, Bombay.
- Iran*: CHARLES OBERLING, Dean, Medical School of Teheran, Teheran.
- Iraq*: SALMAN FAIK, Assoc. Prof., Royal College of Medicine, Bagdad.
- Italy*: FRANCESCO PENTIMALLI, Instituto Pathologia General, San Andrea Dame 8, Naples.
- Korea*: IL SUN YUN, Dept. of Pathology, Seoul University Medical School, Seoul.
- Mexico*: IGNACIO MILLAN, Director of Tumor Clinic, General Hospital, Avenida Vera Cruz 69, Mexico, D.F.
- Netherlands*: R. KORTEWEG, Laboratorium Antoni Van Leeuwenhoek-Ruis, Sarphatistraat 108, Amsterdam.
- Nicaragua*: FERNANDO VALEZ PAIZ, Manuaga, D.N.
- Norway*: LIEV KREYBERG, Dept. of Pathology, University of Oslo, Oslo.
- Palestine*: A. HOCHMAN, Hebrew University, Jerusalem. (Memorial Hospital, Physics Dept., 444 E. 68th St., New York City.)
- Republic of Panama*: ERNESTE ZUBIOTA, P.O. Box 1595, Panama City.
- Peru*: EDUARDO CACERES, Dept. of Anatomy, San Marcos University, Lima. (Chicago Tumor Institute, 21 W. Elm St., Chicago, Ill.)
- Philippine Republic*: JUAN A. ARCELLANA, College of Medicine & Philippine General Hospital, University of Philippines, Manila.
- Portugal*: MANUEL PINTO, Institute de Oncologia, Lisbon. (1324 Eutaw Place, Baltimore, Md.)
- Siam*: CHANAI RUANGSIRI, Chulalankarana University, Bangkok.
- Sweden*: ERIK ASK-UPMARK, University of Upsala, Upsala.
- Switzerland*: H. R. SCHINZ, Rontgeninstitut & Radiotherapeutische Linic, Kantonsspital, Zurich.
- Regency of Tunisia*: CHARLES W. ANDERSON, Directeur Du Laboratoire de Cancerologia de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Regency, Tunis.
- Turkey*: PERIHAN CAMEL, General Secretary, Turkish Association for Cancer Research, Ankara.
- Union of South Africa*: LT. COL. WEINBREN, SAMC, National Cancer Association of South Africa, Johannesburg.
- United States of America*: E. V. COWDRY, Prof. of Anatomy, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.
- Uruguay*: FELIX LEBORGNE, Ibicuy 1210, Montevideo.
- Venezuela*: HERMOGNES RIVERO, El Ministro de Sanidad, Caracas.
- Representatives from Austria, Cuba, Equador, Paraguay, Java, Hungary and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, though named and expected, did not attend.
- Ethiopia, Lebanon, Dominican Republic, Eire, Finland, Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Afghanistan, Liberia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Poland, New Zealand and Bulgaria indicated interest in international cooperation in cancer research.
- The 138 representatives from countries other than the United States included official delegates sent by their countries in response to the invitation transmitted to them by the U. S. Department of State, as well as many acknowledged leaders in cancer research who had no official status.
- An organization meeting was held on September 2 by these representatives from abroad, together with the following official delegates to the Congress appointed by the President of the United States:
- JOHN J. BITTNER, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

JAMES P. COONEY, Colonel U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

E. V. COWDRY, St. Louis, Missouri.

W. U. GARDNER, New Haven, Connecticut.

RONALD L. GRAND, Commander U. S. Navy, Washington, D. C.

ELISE L'ESPERANCE, New York, N. Y.

C. P. RHOADS, New York, N. Y.

LEONARD L. SCHEELE, National Cancer Institute, Washington, D. C.

SHIELDS WARREN, Boston, Massachusetts.

RICHARD B. WILLIAMS, Commander U. S. Navy, Washington, D. C.

Since the group was evidently too large to operate effectively and some nations had numerically much larger representation than others, it was unanimously decided, after full discussion, to assign the duty of making recommendations to a smaller group consisting of but one representative from each of the 40 nations. This group was designated as the Executive Committee of National Representatives.

The Executive Committee held meetings on September 3, 4 and 5. A representative from each of three countries, the United States, Great Britain, and Mexico, successively presided over these meetings. The recommendations prepared were presented for approval on September 6 in English, French and Spanish to the larger body of National Representatives, which established the executive committee, and they were approved. Later in the same day the recommendations were submitted to the entire Fourth International Cancer Research Congress and were adopted unanimously and enthusiastically. These recommendations follow:

A representative body, consisting of one member elected by each of the 40 national groups represented at the Congress, advises the creation of an International Cancer Research Commission.

This group of national representatives recommends that the Congress agree upon the following principles:

1. *That cancer research include all efforts to advance our knowledge of cancer by clinical, experimental or other means.*

2. *That the Commission consist of one member from each country here represented, with equal voting power. Other nations not here represented will be welcome on the same basis.*

3. *That the principal source of financial support should be governmental.*

4. *That the governments should be invited each to send one national representative who should be actively engaged in cancer research, to*

serve for a period of three years, and advises that such representation be changed at the end of this three years. Further, that the Governments after two years select an additional representative who will serve without vote prior to succeeding the voting nominee.

5. *That the Commission should arrange meetings once a year, and never consecutively in the same country.*

6. *That an executive committee be constituted, made up of five members and not more than seven as follows, with alternates:*

1 from Asia,

1 from Latin America,

1 from United States of America,

2 from Europe.

7. *That the first executive committee be constituted as follows:*

LATIN AMERICAN:

Member	Alternate
Dr. Millan	Dr. Leborngé
(Chairman)	

UNITED STATES:

Dr. Cowdry Dr. Gardner

ASIA:

Dr. Khanolkar Dr. Tu-Shan Yung

EUROPE:

Dr. Maisin Dr. Lacassagne,
Dr. Hadow Dr. Engelbreth-Holm

8. *That the Commission form part of the Union Internationale, replacing the Comité Scientifique. It advises that this Commission, within the organization of the Union Internationale, be given the greatest possible freedom of action to attain its goal, and that it have direct power to solicit and distribute financial aid, which has been agreed to by the Union.*

9. *That this Fourth International Research Congress requests of Governments that the group of national representatives here assembled and its Executive Committee be permitted to serve as the first appointee.*

ORGANIZATION

Since the purpose of the Commission is to cooperate effectively in cancer research on a worldwide front, the principle of decentralization was accepted as basic.

Thus, the Executive Committee is broadly representative and the agreement that no member of the Commission shall serve for more than 3 years will prevent gradual domination by a few people and will regularly spread the responsibility to others. The headquarters of the Commission, now in

Mexico City under the direction of Dr. Ignacio Millan (Avenida Vera Cruz 69), will move to the country of his successor in 1950. If, for some reason, his alternate, Dr. Leborgne, has to take his place before 1950, headquarters will be shifted to Montevideo, Uruguay, until Dr. Leborgne's retirement.

Meetings of the Commission will be held annually, but never twice consecutively in the same country since that would tend to promote what we are trying to avoid—centralization. In choosing the location of meetings the strength of nations in cancer research will not be the determining factor. It was agreed that the meeting can sometimes do more good when held in a country actively striving to organize cancer research than in one already well advanced in this respect.

As has been indicated, there is only one Commission member for each nation. These members have equal voting power irrespective of the size of the nations they represent. The value of the Commission depends solely upon free and regular exchange of opinion and mutual helpfulness among its members and between the sovereign nations they represent. There is and can be no element whatever of control by the Commission as a body.

This restriction of members to a minimum will reduce the cost of meetings to a coverage of the bare essentials. It will also call for greater care in the selection of members. The opinion has been repeatedly expressed that the members should be actively engaged in cancer research, that they should be nominated by national civilian organizations and that they should be appointed by governments. Indeed the demand for this *modus operandi* may lead to the formation of National Cancer Societies in countries not now so equipped and to the strengthening of such societies already operating.

DUTIES

Many of the duties of the Commission are self-evident: (1) to strengthen the position of the charter members of the Commission representing the 40 member nations, (2) to arrange for the 20 other nations who formally expressed interest in the International Cancer Research Congress to appoint members to the Commission and (3) to include on the same basis Japan, Germany and Spain.

A report on the Commission has been sent by the U. S. Department of State to all of the nations originally invited to appoint official delegates to the Congress. This will add dignity to the members and the cause in which they are working. In addition, the Chairman of the Commission, ably sup-

ported by those who attended the Congress who are in fact ambassadors of good will, will labor in the same direction. Thanks to these ambassadors, and in no small measure to the American Cancer Society, which assigned to the Congress an expert in Publicity, Mr. Patrick McGrady, the educated public in many lands is beginning to look to the Commission for progress in the fight against the common enemy, cancer.

So much depends on the support given by the public of each country to its national representative on the Commission that publicity looms large in the service rendered by the Commission. The Commission as a world group will give such assistance to its members when invited to do so; but never will it interfere by giving unsolicited advice. In some instances, descriptive pamphlets already available require only translation into other languages before they can be distributed as desired by the members. In other cases they must be modified or completely rewritten to suit the local conditions. To guide such publicity directed to the achievement of world cooperation in cancer research would be an inspiring task for the right person. It must be well managed because a few mistakes would undermine the influence for good of the Commission.

Already the Commission is in receipt of many welcome suggestions as to how it can best operate. Some are general in character while others are specific. The Chairman, Dr. Ignacio Millan, will take them all under advisement. It is his duty to reach a decision on his own responsibility, or, in case of doubt, to refer them to his Executive Committee or to the whole Commission at some annual meeting. The same applies to other important questions besides service.

The Commission is ideally constituted for integration by the pooling of information at the annual meetings to which the members will bring their hopes and plans for cancer research in their several countries and from which they will return encouraged and strengthened by consultation with others dedicated to the same cause. It would be helpful if each member consented to make a brief progress report and if all of these reports could be combined and published as an annual world progress report and if all of these reports could be combined and published as an annual world progress report on cancer research. The fellowship developed at the meetings should grow between meetings by mutual exchange of news, especially about new techniques and apparatus, new research projects, and possibly concerning better means of diagnosis and treatment.

To be most helpful the principle of two-way exchange should be fostered. For all paths to lead in one direction promotes centralization, rather than decentralization, with spreading of cooperation. Travel for cancer research between nations should be more nearly equal going and coming. For example, it is helpful for investigators to visit England from Argentina; it is also advantageous for them to visit Argentina from England. Travel should be to all countries, as well as from all countries, in drawing the world together for more effective cancer research.

Research would be facilitated if there could be some agreement on the nomenclature of malignant and benign tumors for at present there is a good deal of confusion. The American Medical Association, the American College of Surgeons and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists have a committee now working on this subject. A member of this committee has approached the Commission with the idea that we want not a national nomenclature but a world nomenclature. Before adoption of the revised system of names, it should therefore be referred to the whole International Cancer Research Commission at one of its annual meetings. Preliminary discussion would facilitate matters.

It is possible that the Commission might be able to devise a standard form for recording the clinical history of cancer patients acceptable to all of its member nations. Widespread use of this form would be of enormous assistance in cancer research because observations on cancer in different geographic areas offering a wide variety of climatic, racial, nutritional and other important factors would then have been made on the same basis. In a word, the results would stack up constructively.

Allied to these problems of nomenclature and clinical histories is that of Tumor Registries. A strong committee on Tumor Registries has been appointed by Dr. Shields Warren of the Atomic Energy Commission. He has expressed himself as very sympathetic to the proposition that, if possible, the plans of organization should be so adjusted that the Commission will be able to recommend them for world adoption. This is, of course, a difficult task involving much friendly discussion with Dr. Millan and his associates, but it is very definitely worthwhile.

It has been proposed that the Commission proceed further in laying the basis for cancer research, not only by discussion and by reaching international agreements, but also by the actual contribution of microscopic specimens. According to this plan, preparations would be made of recognized

types of human malignant and benign tumors and of so-called precancerous lesions. These would be of high technical excellence. Other preparations would show microchemical technics as applied to cancers. Collections of such standard specimens would be supplied to the member nations wanting them. Like all activities of the Commission, this service if undertaken, should be cooperative. Instead of having a central laboratory do the job, several members might be willing to share the work so that the headquarters of the Commission would only have to assemble the collections and distribute them.

Not infrequently cancer research is held up by lack of some chemical, dye, or piece of apparatus. The worker feels frustrated and may even abandon very promising investigations. When thus inhibited the various members of the Commission strategically situated throughout the world should act as agents for the member in difficulty, or his friends, by advising him where the missing material or equipment can be secured with a minimum of delay. Such requests for aid should be channeled through the Chairman of the Commission.

Much time can also be lost in cancer research by the investigation of side lines of little real significance for want of expert advice. Workers pride themselves in their independence and they tend often to learn the hard way by repeated failures. Having in mind the grim character of the killer, cancer, speed is needed. Therefore, help should be sought and the question is, where can it best be secured? The haphazard and often inadequate way is to write to one's friends. In this matter I think the Commission can develop great usefulness. It might for instance decide to construct a master plan of cancer research which would include the names of a few leaders actively engaged on all fronts. Having done so, the Chairman of the Commission would then be in a position immediately to answer inquiries by sending the name and address of the person best qualified to advise wherever he may happen to be. This information is well known to mature investigators of long experience working in great centers of cancer research, but it is not known to beginners and to those more or less isolated geographically from others dedicated to the same objective. It is the high purpose of the International Cancer Research Commission to bring laborers in this field of cancer together and to bolster teamwork.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are two immediate financial needs of equal urgency: To provide for the first annual meeting

of the Commission and to supply headquarter's expenses.

At present there are 40 charter member Nations. By next summer, when the meeting will be held, it is expected that about 10 other Nations will have designated members. Travel expenses must then be obtained somehow for representatives of 50 Nations. Certainly, some of these countries will pay the necessary expenses, whether from governmental or private funds. Others will obviously be unable to do so. The old selfish attitude would be to say, "Well, leave them out." But to act in this narrow way would be greatly to cripple the usefulness of the Commission. Consequently, it becomes the privilege of the more fortunate nations to help these others financially, with the understanding that as soon as possible they will defray the expenses of their own representatives at future annual meetings. How many these will be is not known definitely—perhaps 30. Reckoning at \$1,500 each, which was the amount usually allowed for travel to the Fourth International Cancer Research Congress in St. Louis, the sum to be raised for the first annual meeting of the Commission amounts to \$45,000.

The Chairman and members of the Commission serve for a maximum of 3 years without salary from the Commission. As they are busy people with other duties to perform, the Headquarters of the Commission needs to be strengthened by a full-time salaried staff not subject to the 3 years limitation, because it is important for some of them to carry on in the administration of subsequent chairmen in other parts of the world for the sake of continuity. This staff should consist of a Vice-Chairman, a Director of Publicity, 2 secretaries, and translators paid per diem. The annual cost of salaries would be in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

Expenses of headquarters are difficult to estimate. Offices and furnishings might well be loaned

by the institution to which the Chairman belongs. Other items include materials, printing, postage, etc., plus a sum for travel between meetings of the Commission. The last named item is important because some of the member nations should be visited and a meeting of the 5 member executive committee would be essential. Such expenses would amount annually to about \$20,000.

Evidently, therefore, a total of about \$100,000 is required properly to launch this the first International Cancer Research Commission. This would permit operation for somewhat more than a year because the personnel could not be immediately assembled and at the beginning expenditures would be small but before the second annual meeting of the Commission, we hope further enlarged, additional money would be needed. By that time a more extensive sharing of the expenses by member nations would be achieved.

The problem is how to raise the initial \$100,000. The mechanism has been established. The receipts thus far small and altogether unsolicited (\$1,490.72) have been deposited by the Treasurer of the Commission, Mr. E. S. Jones, in the First National Bank in St. Louis. Disbursements will be made on vouchers signed by the Chairman and another member of the Commission and periodic audits will be made for the Commission. In this country the National Advisory Cancer Council of the United States Public Health Service is legally unable to make grants for travel and it is doubtful whether the American Cancer Society can properly aid financially any activity outside of the United States. We believe that merely making known in the member nations the purpose, organization and activities of the International Cancer Research Commission will bring in adequate financial support, since thinking people everywhere understand the need for cancer research on a world-wide basis.