

Iranian Cancer Research Network: an initiative for Iranian cancer researcher to collaborate for implementation and of the comprehensive cancer control program in Iran

Kazem Zendehdel

Cancer Research Center, Cancer Institute of Iran, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran.
kzendeh@tums.ac.ir

Cancer control is placed among the top priorities by the World Health Organization. The United Nations General Assembly will hold a Non-communicable Disease (NCD) Summit in September 2011 bringing together world head of states to address the rising burden of NCD and discuss solutions and actions need to be undertaken in this respect. The program will mainly focus on 4 major diseases including respiratory diseases, diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

Establishment of the Research networks in Iran is an initiative of the ministry of health to put the research into practice and link the scientific research to the national priorities and public health problems in the country. The networks have the responsibility to organize, and reinforce the cooperation among research centers and public health authorities, policy makers and NGOs. Based on the approved statement in the ministry of health, objectives of research networks include providing solutions for national health problems, providing national research priorities in their subjects, fostering collaboration among research center and decrease unnecessary duplicate research, enhancing cooperation atmosphere among the member centers, increasing international collaboration, increasing the quantity and quality of research in the country, increasing research capacities and specialization of the member centers, increasing relationship between academy and industry.

General assembly of Iranian Cancer Research Network,(www.cancer.net.research.ir) was held in March 2011 with the participation of representatives from more than 30 research centers, and other stakeholders including non-communicable disease office in the ministry of health, Iranian cancer association, Iranian Radiotherapy Oncology Association, Non-Governmental Organizations, and etc.

Mission of the Iranian cancer research network is provide scientific evidence and monitor different aspects of national cancer control program including primary prevention, early detection and screening, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, and palliation in order to mitigate burden of different cancers in the country. Cancer research network actively follows the objectives in four directions to answers questions from members, policy makers and health authorities, industry, and society in general. In addition to the network secretariat that will arrange cooperation among the members, three committees are established to plan and follow action plans for the corresponding audiences in each group.

During a short period since March 201, ICRN was asked by the authorities in the ministry of health to accept responsibility and develop national clinical guideline for treatment of Iranian breast cancer patients who need expensive drugs, particularly, Trastuzumab (Herceptin®), an expensive posing challenge to the patients and authorities. In addition, ministry of health also asked the ICRN to plan and work on a national program for palliative care of Iranian cancer patients. Several members have proposed for the secretariat to put establishment of the national cancer registry as the main priority in the network.

We hope that this initiative will help members to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their research activities. It will also link the scientific evidence to the policy making in the cancer control program and to the health industry. It will allow for large, multi-center, multidisciplinary research that addresses the spectrum of cancer control, including prevention, early detection, treatment, survivorship, surveillance, and end-of-life care. It will also foster international collaboration research for our public health priorities.