

# News from BCNet Members

## European Biobank Week

The National Cancer Institute of Egypt recently attended the European Biobank Week, where Dr Ahmed Samir gave a presentation entitled *Using different tools to introduce the concept of biobanking to the public in Egypt* and Dr Rania Labib gave a presentation: *Biobank Participation Beliefs and Attitudes: Analysis of Factors influencing participation in a paediatric cancer research biorepository - Egypt*.

**A Biobanking Course For Medical Students: Targeting potential future customers**

Ahmed Samir AbdelHafiz<sup>1</sup>, Merhan A. Fouda<sup>2</sup>, Shammaa I. El-Jaafari<sup>3</sup>, Rania M. Labib<sup>4</sup>, Hala Gabr<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biorepository and Biospecimen Research Unit, Research Dept. Children Cancer Hospital Egypt; <sup>2</sup> Clinical and Chemical Pathology Dept. Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University; <sup>3</sup> Clinical Pathology Dept. MC, Cairo University; <sup>4</sup> Egyptian National Cancer Institute Biobank; <sup>5</sup> Neurology Dept. Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University.

**Introduction**

Biobanking is a new concept in Egypt and knowledge about it, is still limited. Public engagement and enhancing social acceptability is fundamental for biobank success. Medical students represent a specific segment of the public, since they represent potential future customers for the biobank and, they come in direct contact with potential participants. Raising awareness and creating a positive attitude about biobanks in this group could have a positive effect on the future of biobank work in Egypt.

**Results**

40 participants attended the course, most participants were from the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University. Participants from the Faculty of Pharmacy and the Faculty of Science were present as well.

**Results (Continued)**

We used Facebook again for evaluation. A post about the course was created on ESBB Facebook page. The post performed better than 95% of other posts on the page and the insights of the page in the form of page likes, post reach and people engagement have improved significantly in the next few days after the course. This interaction was considered as another sign for satisfaction of participants about the content.

**Methods**

Two days course was conducted for undergraduate students at the Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University. The course aimed at introducing the concept of biobanking to the target group, provide basic knowledge about issues related to biobanking and medical research including ethics, quality, information technology and to discuss its medical research applications as pharmacogenetics and personalized medicine. In addition to traditional lectures, interesting teaching methods were used. Case studies (real and hypothetical) were used to explain ethics, and a funny quiz to explain quality. Facebook and word of mouth were used only for marketing and advertising. Some lectures were included about stem cells, a science that was attractive to the target group. The course was endorsed by BCNET.

**Conclusion**

- Biobanking training and education can be carried out with limited resources and at a low cost.
- Understanding the needs of the target group and using the appropriate measures for communication is essential to prepare the curriculum and to ensure efficient message delivery.
- Using social media for communication can be an easy, effective and a cheap method for interaction and getting feedback. However, this method has some drawbacks since updates may not reach some participants. So, social media can be used in combination with other methods to increase efficiency.

**Contact Information:**

- Dr. Ahmed Samir AbdelHafiz [drahmedsamir83@gmail.com](mailto:drahmedsamir83@gmail.com)
- Dr. Merhan A. Fouda [Fouda.merhan@yahoo.com](mailto:Fouda.merhan@yahoo.com)

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Contact:  
Dr Ahmed Samir  
National Cancer Institute  
✉ [drahmedsamir83@gmail.com](mailto:drahmedsamir83@gmail.com)

## A new BCNet member: Alexandria University

Dr Fayek Elkhwsy sent some information about himself as an introduction. He is Head of the Department of Biomedical Informatics and Medical Statistics, Medical Research Institute. He has attended and conducted several training and research activities at the Mario Negri Institute in Milan, Italy, the University of California Irvine, USA and Oxford University, UK. Dr Elkhwsy has published several articles on bladder cancer, liver cancer, skin cancer, breast cancer, Wilms' tumour and ovarian cancer. He has collaborations with all the oncology centres in Egypt, including the National Liver Institute, National Cancer Institute, Damanhur University, Pharos University in Alexandria, Tanta University and Childhood Cancer Institute and the Ministry of Health hospitals in Alexandria.

He is particularly proud of collaboration with the largest charity of Alexandria Ayadia Almostkbal – Oncology Center (AAA\_OC) and Alexandria Childhood University where he is collaborating to establish a population-based Childhood Cancer Registry.

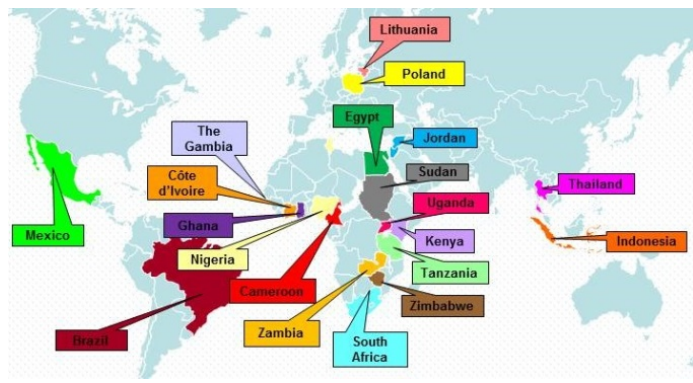
Dr Elkhwsy is an associate member of the Union International for Cancer Control (UICC), European Association for Cancer Research (EACR), Egyptian Association for Cancer Research (EARC), Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) and European, North Africa, Middle East for Biopreservation and Biobanking (ESBB). He has been nominated EMRO WHO Temporary Advisor in STD control in the region and has designed and conducted several research projects in Saudi Arabia and Libya on cancer, infertility and tropical diseases.

Targets for the Medical Research Institute include: to have a well-established, population-based cancer registry for Alexandria, to be a distinguished institute with a leading role in collaborating to accelerate the understanding of cancer, tropical diseases and other health problems in Alexandria, Egypt and globally.

Contact:  
Dr Fayek Elkhwsy  
Alexandria University  
✉ [felkhwsy@alexu.edu.eg](mailto:felkhwsy@alexu.edu.eg)



# BCNet Members



Barretos Cancer Hospital

Brazil



Department of Medical Sciences  
Université des Montagnes

Cameroon



Faculty of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences  
University of Yaounde I

Cameroon



Institut Pasteur

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Egypt



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Egypt



Children's Cancer Hospital -  
57357

Egypt



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