

International Cancer Screening Network (ICSN) Applied Research Program

Overview

The International Cancer Screening Network (ICSN) is a voluntary consortium of countries that have active population-based cancer screening programs. These programs can be national or subnational in scope, and established or pilot-based. Administered by the Applied Research Program of the National Cancer Institute, the consortium was established in December 1988 as the International Breast Cancer Screening Database Project during an international workshop involving representatives from 11 countries. The consortium has since grown to encompass 28 countries, and address screening for colon and cervical cancer as well. Specific activities are moved forward through working groups and biennial meetings.

The initial purpose of the ICSN was to generate a database for the evaluation of screening mammography programs. In 1997, the group decided to shift its focus from creating a common database to collaborative efforts aimed at understanding how to:

1. Use and compare data from screening mammography programs internationally.
2. Develop methods for evaluating the impact of population-based breast cancer screening programs.

In keeping with this realignment of purpose, in 1997 the group changed its name to the International Breast Cancer Screening Network. As work of the group grew to encompass colorectal and cervical cancer screening, it was renamed the International Cancer Screening Network.

The ICSN is dedicated to collaborative research aimed at identifying and fostering efficient and effective approaches to cancer control worldwide through population-based screening. It does not address efficacy or use clinical trial data. Participation in the ICSN is open to any country that has initiated a population-based cancer screening program.

Countries Participating in the ICSN

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland, Republic of
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Korea
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Portugal
- Turkey
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Uruguay

Collaborative Projects

ICSN members have worked together to evaluate cancer screening and improve outcomes through collaborative projects or working groups focused on targeted data research, collection, and assessment that result in best practices recommendations. The work of these groups is often coordinated with comparable activities within the European

Cancer Network (ECN), now administered by the Interagency for Research Against Cancer (IARC).

- **Program Assessment Working Group**
Documented the nature of the screening programs program assessments of screening policies, funding, guidelines, and program organization.
- **Performance Parameters Evaluation**
Focuses on enhancing understanding of intermediate measures of screening performance and variations in these measures across countries.
- **Communications**
Identified and encouraged "best practices" in communicating information about screening mammography, and developed communication materials that countries can tailor for use in their specific populations.
- **Mortality Evaluation**
Considers designs to evaluate the impact of population-based screening on breast cancer mortality and other outcomes.
- **Treatment Quality Indicators**
Examines possible quality indicators for treatment of breast cancer across ICSN countries.
- **Standardized Measures of Breast Density and Hormone Therapy**
Standardizes measure of breast density and hormone therapy and examines the effect of these measures of screening performance and breast cancer outcomes.

ICSN Collaborative Publications

Designing Print Materials: A Communications Guide for Breast Cancer Screening

is a practical guide developed to improve the quality of information provided by breast cancer screening programs to consumers. This new publication offers a summary of informational materials and decision tools used internationally by breast cancer screening programs to communicate with women about mammography.

Designing Print Materials describes the essential tasks involved in designing print materials including planning, audience assessment, message and materials testing, and assists the user in identifying appropriate communications medium for maximizing audience reach. Additional valuable resources found in the guide include the "Dos and Don'ts" of materials development, planning worksheets, and checklists and references.

<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/icsn/publications/guide.html>

For more collaborative ICSN publications addressing the evaluation of population-based and organized breast cancer screening:

<http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/icsn/publications/icsn.html>

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