

Seventh Epidemiological Training Workshop for Biologists Draws Capacity Crowd, to RERF's Delight

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The seventh Epidemiological Training Workshop for Biologists, sponsored by the Council of Radiation Effects Research Organizations,* was held at the Hiroshima RERF Auditorium August 29–30, 2016. In addition to the 48 participants from outside organizations, many RERF staff also attended the workshop and helped to make it a success.

This workshop featured a new session, “Biology for non-specialists I,” in the morning program on the first day, with Dr. Asao Noda, Assistant Chief, Department of Molecular Biosciences, serving as the speaker. Dr. Kotaro Ozasa, Chief, Department of Epidemiology, and Dr. Ohtsura Niwa, RERF Chairman, then delivered opening remarks to kick off the workshop.

Lectures on RERF’s epidemiological research and its results were presented first, including “Epidemiology for non-specialists” by Dr. Sakata; “Recent results from the Life Span Study (LSS)” by Dr. Ozasa; and “Risk of heart diseases” by Dr. Kazunori Kodama, RERF Chief Scientist. Following these lectures, Dr. Nori Nakamura, Consultant, Department of Molecular Biosciences, gave a lecture titled “Genetic effects of radiation: why are they undetected in humans?” to conclude the morning session.

Participant self-introductions, scheduled during lunchtime, had to be canceled, because the large number of participants made getting to everyone

difficult.

In the afternoon, the following lectures were delivered:

- “Radiation exposure and thyroid cancer” (Dr. Misa Imaizumi, Chief, Divisions of Radiology and Clinical Laboratories [concurrent assignment], Department of Clinical Studies, Nagasaki)
- “Is cancer susceptibility high among those exposed to radiation at a young age?” (Dr. Atsuko Sadakane, Acting Chief, Laboratory of Pathology, Department of Epidemiology)
- “Radiation’s effect on the fetus: an unresolved issue” (Dr. Kanya Hamasaki, research scientist, Department of Molecular Biosciences)
- “Mechanism of radiation-induced leukemia” and “Introduction to mutual understanding of mouse experiments and epidemiological research” (Dr. Nakamura)

Most participants also attended the reception party, which began with greetings by Vice Chairman Dr. Robert L. Ullrich and Dr. Kiyohiko Mabuchi, Senior Scientist, U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI). Participants stayed until late in the evening enjoying conversation.

On the second day of the workshop, the morning session began with “Radiobiology for non-specialists II” by Dr. Nakamura. This presentation was followed by “Tissue-specific variance of naturally occurring cancers” (introduction of

Tomasetti paper), in which Dr. Munechika Misumi, Research Scientist, Department of Statistics, explained the statistical models used in the paper. The next presentations were “How should epidemiology and biology be connected?” by Dr. Mabuchi and “Radiation carcinogenesis and stem cells” by Dr. Niwa. After the lectures, a general discussion was held to conclude the workshop.

In his lecture, Dr. Nakamura explained that the workshop was initiated on the basis of his own difficulties in understanding RERF’s epidemiology publications and because he thought biologists in other organizations



Scene of training workshop at Auditorium, with Dr. Ritsu Sakata, Senior Scientist, Epidemiology Dept., giving a lecture (at rear left)

would face similar difficulties, as they were likely not in regular contact with statisticians or epidemiologists.

To this 2016 workshop, we were able to attract a broader range of participants due to the Japan Health Physics Society's efforts to publicize the event. Participation of those in varied fields and from different backgrounds is welcome from the viewpoint of enhancing participant exchange and having discussions from varied viewpoints. On the other hand, by preparing training and lectures focused on the participants' various fields and backgrounds, the program is starting to feel overloaded. We may have to review our program preparation and think about modifications, such as making the basic lectures more compact in the future.

RERF technicians also participated in this year's workshop. We hope that the event was helpful for them to reaffirm the mission of RERF and review scientific basics of their work. In conclusion, I would like to thank the participants, lecturers, and staff of the General Affairs Section and the Department of Epidemiology involved in the preparations for making this workshop a success.



Workshop program

*The Council of Radiation Effects Research Organizations, consisting of the Institute for Environmental Sciences, Kyoto University, Nagasaki University, Hirosaki University, Hiroshima University, Fukushima Medical University, National Institute of Radiological Sciences, and Radiation Effects Research Foundation (order arranged according to the Japanese syllabary), was established to develop understanding and association among radiation research organizations.