

29 June 2023

RERF Holds 50th SAC Meeting

The 50th meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was held over three days, March 22–24, 2023 (Japan time). Against the backdrop of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the meeting this year was once again held remotely. The SAC is a body of outside scientific experts representing different disciplines that reviews the research programs conducted at RERF and makes recommendations to RERF's Board of Directors and Board of Councilors with respect to adoption of new research programs and continuation or alteration of programs under progress.

During the three days, a total of 11 scientific advisors from the United States and Japan attended the meeting. These included seven regular SAC scientific advisors and four special scientific advisors. Also viewing the proceedings were observers from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the U.S. Department of Energy, members of the RERF Board of Councilors, and auditors.

Departments undergoing extensive SAC review rotate each year. This time, both the Clinical Studies Department and the Research Resource Center (RRC), a unit tasked with integrating scientific and biosample data and supporting use of such information in collaborative research, underwent detailed assessment. The other departments of Statistics, Epidemiology, Molecular Biosciences and Information Technology were also reviewed. In addition, the Biosample Research Center (BRC), an office that manages and preserves in freezers urine, blood, and other biosamples donated by survivors and their children, was reviewed as well. Another important aspect of this year's SAC review was RERF's Strategic Plan, which serves as a blueprint for future science and operations of the institute.

Dr. Ohtsura Niwa, RERF Chairman, opened the meeting on March 22 by explaining, among other topics, the Strategic Plan, with its particular highlights on the ways RERF can give back its research results to A-bomb survivors and their children. Dr. Robert Ullrich, RERF Vice Chairman and Chief of Research, provided a comprehensive overview of research programs and supporting structures. The previously mentioned intensive review of the Clinical Studies Department also took place on the first day of the three-day meeting. The second day of the meeting, March 23, primarily involved discussions about the RRC. The work of other departments, such as Statistics, Epidemiology, MBS, the BRC, and ITD, was also discussed. On the morning of March 24, the final day of the meeting, discussions focused on RERF's future activities and priorities related to the organization's Strategic Plan. After those discussions, SAC members entered into deliberations for formulation of their recommendations based on the three days of meetings. After a meeting wrap-up session, a press conference was held online with eight media members from seven organizations. To begin, Dr. Gen Suzuki, Professor and Director, International University of Health and Welfare Clinic, summarized for the media the three days of discussions in his role as SAC Co-chair. Dr. Jonine Bernstein, the other SAC Co-chair and Attending Epidemiologist, Co-Program Leader Survivorship, Outcomes and Risk Program, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, was unable to participate in the media event due to the time difference. Dr. Suzuki reported to the media the following points from the SAC meeting:

- That with the SAC meeting's time limitations, presentation videos had been distributed in advance, a format that allowed questions and comments to be submitted ahead of the online meeting;

- That because of the meeting's focus on the Clinical Studies Department and the RRC, four special scientific advisors with expertise in clinical research (cardiac pathology) and research resource management participated alongside the seven scientific advisory committee members from Japan and the United States, for a total of 11 participants;
- That the Strategic Plan emphasized incorporation of the latest scientific advances to elucidate the mechanisms behind radiation health effects. Following the recommendations of the previous year's SAC, the strategic plan has become more specific and the challenges for its implementation have been clarified;
- That the SAC was pleased to learn of the progress made in formulating in-house policies and regulations for promoting the 'trio' genome research (studies using 1,000 three-person, parent-child groups to clarify genetic effects from the atomic bombings based on parental radiation dose by investigating whether numbers of chromosomal mutations derived from the germ cells of parents are increased in the genomes of A-bomb survivors' children) to be conducted by MBS, given that elucidation of the hereditary effects of radiation is the most important theme pursued since the ABCC era;
- That, with the foundation's huge amount of research data, RERF is uniquely positioned to carry out comprehensive analysis using clinical and epidemiological data and chronologically preserved biological samples, with it advisable to promote, in timely fashion, joint research using such data with researchers outside of RERF.
- That the Clinical Research Department's longitudinal clinical data and information on lifestyle habits combined with the latest analysis technology are valuable assets for understanding mechanisms behind radiation health effects. For such research, involvement of the departments of Epidemiology and Statistics is advisable;
- That the high-priority development of the RRC made significant progress and, because the RRC is essential for archiving and integrating all data provided by RERF study participants, further progress is required to ensure that the data are preserved and accessible for future generations;
- And, finally, that RRC activities should be enhanced to archive the huge volume of historical materials at RERF to ensure valuable materials are not lost.

Below is a list of SAC meeting participants:

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

Dr. Jonine Bernstein, Attending Epidemiologist, Co-Program Leader Survivorship, Outcomes and Risk Program, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (Co-chairperson)

Dr. Gen Suzuki, Professor and Director, International University of Health and Welfare Clinic (Co-chairperson)

Dr. Gayle Woloschak, Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University

Dr. Michiaki Kai, Professor, New Department Preparatory Office, Nippon Bunri University

Dr. Fumihiko Matsuda, Director, Center for Genomic Medicine, Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine

Dr. Chisato Nagata, Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Gifu University Graduate School of Medicine

Dr. Yoshiya Shimada, President, Institute for Environmental Sciences

SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

Dr. Paul Spellman, Professor, Molecular and Medical Genetics, School of Medicine, Co-Director, CEDAR, Oregon Health & Science University Knight Cancer Institute, School of Medicine

Dr. Ken Kozuma, Cardiologist and Professor and Director of the Circulatory Disease Center,

Teikyo University Hospital, Chief of the Radiation Protection Guideline Committee of the Japanese Circulation Society

Dr. Melissa Haendel, Chief Research Informatics Officer, Marsico Chair in Data Science, University of Colorado Anschutz, Director of the Center for Data to Health

Dr. Soichi Ogishima, Professor, Department of Health Record Informatics, Department of Informatics for Genomic Medicine, Tohoku University Advanced Research Center for Innovations in Next-Generation Medicine/Medical Megabank Organization

AUDITORS

Mr. Takashi Kohno, Certified Public Accountant and Tax Accountant, Hiroshima All-In Law and Accounting Office

Mr. Paul D. Preziotti, Certified Public Accountant/ Partner, Johnson Lambert LLP

OBSERVERS

Mr. Kazuyuki Okano, Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors, General Affairs Division, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Dr. Junichi Nitta, Deputy Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors, General Affairs Division, Health Service Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

Mr. Kevin Dressman, Director Office of Health and Safety, Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security, U.S. Department of Energy

Dr. Isaf Al-Nabulsi, Science and Energy Program Manager, Office of the Undersecretary For Science and Innovation, U.S. Department of Energy

Dr. Elizabeth Eide, Executive Director, Division on Earth and Life Studies, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Dr. Charles Ferguson, Director, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, Division on Earth and Life Studies, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences

Dr. Rania Kosti, Senior Program Officer, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

RERF Board of Councilors

Dr. Ryugo Hayano, Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo (Executive Councilor)

Dr. Angela L. Bies, Endowed Associate Professor of Global Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland (Vice Executive Councilor)

Dr. Joe W. Gray, Professor and Gordon Moore Endowed Chair, Department of Biomedical Engineering, School of Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University

Dr. Kenji Kamiya, Vice-President and Specially Appointed Professor, Hiroshima University

Dr. Jonathan M. Samet, Dean, School of Public Health, University of Colorado

Dr. Keith R. Yamamoto, Professor, Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Strategy, Director UCSF Precision Medicine

Dr. Yoshiharu Yonekura, Specially Appointed Professor, Division of Science, Institute for Radiation Sciences, Osaka University

RERF

Dr. Ohtsura Niwa, Chairman/Representative Director

Dr. Robert Ullrich, Vice Chairman and Chief of Research

Dr. Kazunori Kodama, Executive Director

Dr. Osamu Tanabe, Chief Scientist/Director of Biosample Research Center

Mr. Satomichi Kaneoka, Chief of Secretariat



[RERF Holds 50th SAC Meeting – Radiation Effects Research Foundation \(RERF\)](#)