

12 July 2024

RERF Holds 51st SAC Meeting



Participants of 51st Scientific Advisory Committee meeting

The 51st meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was held over three days, March 12–14, 2024 (Japan Standard Time). Recent SAC meetings had been held online due to the coronavirus pandemic, but this year's meeting was held in person, for the first time in five years, at the Hiroshima Laboratory. The SAC is a body composed of outside scientific experts that reviews the research conducted at RERF and makes recommendations regarding the adoption of new research protocols and the continuation or modification of ongoing studies. Nine of the 10 Scientific Advisors from Japan and the U.S. participated in the meeting, which was also attended by observers from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the U.S. Department of Energy, members of the RERF Board of Councilors, and the RERF Auditors.

Departments and topics undergoing SAC's intensive review rotate each year. This year, the Department of Molecular Biosciences, progress reports on RERF cohort studies※, and the Research Resource Center, which integrates scientific research data and biosample data, underwent reviews.

On the first day, March 12, the meeting opened with RERF Chair Kenji Kamiya's greetings, followed by Vice Chair Preetha Rajaraman's general overview of the foundation's research strategy. After that, intensive reviews were conducted of the Department of Molecular Biosciences, the progress reports on RERF's studies, and the Research Resource Center.

On the second day, March 13, discussions mainly involved RERF's strategic plan for research. A facility tour and meetings with the Departments of Clinical Studies, Epidemiology, and Statistics were also conducted.

On the morning of the final day, March 14, discussions centered around RERF's progress in improving its research infrastructure and in evaluating and promoting its strategic plan, with a focus on RERF's efforts to address institutional issues, its efforts related to the strategic plan, and other priority issues.

After completing the above process, the committee drafted its recommendations and summarized the discussions, after which a press conference was held with 12 journalists from 11 media outlets in attendance.

At the beginning of the press conference, an overview of the committee's three-day discussions was provided to the media by Dr. Fumihiko Matsuda, Director, Center for Genomic Medicine, Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine (Japan co-chairperson), and Dr. Gayle Woloschak, Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University (U.S. co-chairperson).

* RERF cohort studies are used to investigate the effects of radiation on the human body. The studies have been carried out since the 1950s based on cooperation from atomic bomb survivors and their children.

The following is the SAC overview:

- In June last year, a new Chair and Vice Chair took office at RERF. The new Chair specializes in radiation carcinogenesis, and the new Vice Chair is an expert in molecular epidemiology. The SAC looks forward to the further development of RERF through strong leadership that leverages their expertise.
- The Department of Molecular Biosciences reported on its meticulously planned study to analyze the genomes (entirety of genetic information) of A-bomb survivors and their children in order to investigate the effects of radiation on future generations, which is research that was approved by RERF's Institutional Review Board last year. It was also reported that a small-scale pilot analysis was in progress, and that a full-scale analysis would begin after sufficient explanation is made to A-bomb survivors, other stakeholders, and society. To conduct this study, RERF must utilize the vast amount of health-related information and biosamples it has accumulated over the years with the substantial cooperation of A-bomb survivors and their children. Of all the institutions in the world, only RERF has the capability to conduct this incredibly unique study. In addition, this is new style of research will utilize the expertise of investigators in multiple disciplines as well as cutting-edge technology and is expected to yield far greater results than conventional studies. The study's results are anticipated to contribute significantly to society. The SAC hopes that RERF will join together as an organization to conduct the study by building a solid system of implementation based on a detailed research plan, actively promoting collaborations with research organizations in Japan and overseas with different areas of expertise, and broadly utilizing the results obtained in future studies.
- Due to collaboration among multiple RERF departments, clinical and biosample information has been accumulated steadily in the integrated information database developed by the Department of Information Technology, and this database is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of research plans, the establishment of collaborative research systems, the smooth promotion of research, and other future research activities.
- It was reported to the SAC that the Hiroshima Laboratory would move to a campus of Hiroshima University in FY2025. The SAC strongly expects that the relocation will lead to the further development of RERF by increasing opportunities for personnel exchanges and new collaborations with Hiroshima University.
- The SAC looks forward to RERF's continue efforts to contribute to human health through its future research activities.

Below is a list of SAC meeting participants:

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

Dr. Gayle Woloschak, Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University (Co-chairperson)

Dr. Fumihiko Matsuda, Director, Center for Genomic Medicine, Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine (Co-chairperson)

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

Dr. Gen Suzuki, Professor and Director, International University of Health and Welfare Clinic (title at the time)

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

Dr. Nilanjan Chatterjee, Bloomberg Distinguished Professor, Department of Biostatistics, Bloomberg School of Public Health and Department of Oncology, School of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Yoshiya Shimada, President, Institute for Environmental Sciences

Dr. Patrick Concannon, Professor Emeritus, Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Florida

Dr. Tatsuhiko Imaoka, Group Leader, Modifying Factor/Stem Cell Research Group, Department of Radiation Effects Research, National Institute of Radiological Sciences, Quantum Life and Medical Science Directorate, National Institute for Quantum Science and Technology

AUDITORS

Mr. Takashi Kohno, Certified Public Accountant, Takashi Kohno CPA Office

OBSERVERS

Mr. Kazuyuki Okano, Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors, General Affairs Division, Public Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (via Online)

Dr. Tomofumi Harasawa, Deputy Director, General Affairs Division, Public Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (via Online)

Dr. Kouta Ohshima, Deputy Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors, General Affairs Division, Public Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (via Online)(title at the time)

Dr. S. Robin Elgart, Director, Office of Domestic and International Health Studies, Office of Health and Safety, Office of Environment, Health, Safety and Security, U.S. Department of Energy

Dr. Joey Zhou, Interim DOE/Japan Program Manager, Senior Epidemiologist Dr. Elizabeth Eide, Executive Director, Division on Earth and Life Studies, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

Dr. Charles Ferguson, Senior Board Director Board on Chemical Sciences and Technology Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board

Dr. Daniel Mulrow, Program Officer, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, National

Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

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

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

RERF

Dr. Kenji Kamiya, Chair/Representative Director

Dr. Preetha Rajaraman, Vice Chair and Executive Director

Dr. Kazunori Kodama, Executive Director

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

Mr. Satomichi Kaneoka, Chief of Secretariat

[RERF Holds 51st SAC Meeting – Radiation Effects Research Foundation \(RERF\)](#)