

15 April 2025

## RERF Holds 52<sup>nd</sup> SAC Meeting



The 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) was held over three days, March 3–5, 2025 (Japan Standard Time), at the RERF Hiroshima Laboratory. The SAC is a body made up of outside experts that reviews ongoing studies and research being conducted at RERF and provides recommendations for approval of new research plans and continuation or modification of existing projects.

At the March meeting, a total of 11 members participated: nine Scientific Advisory Committee members from Japan and the United States (with one absent of 10 total) and two Special Scientific Advisors. Also in attendance were observers from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, as well as RERF Auditors and Councilors.

The focus of the SAC changes each year, with this year's committee concentrating its deliberations on two areas: (1) the Trio Genome Study, which involves analysis of the genomes (entirety of genetic information) of A-bomb survivors and their children to investigate radiation effects in the next generation; and (2) the Department of Epidemiology.

On the first day of the SAC meeting, March 3, following opening remarks by RERF Chair Dr. Kenji Kamiya, Vice-Chair Dr. Preetha Rajaraman presented an overview of RERF's strategic plans for research. This was followed by the committee's deliberations on RERF's Trio Genome Study and the Epidemiology Department, as well as an overview of a new dosimetry methodology.

On the second day, March 4, overviews were presented by the Statistics Department, the Molecular Biosciences Department, and the Clinical Studies Department. Committee deliberations that day also covered systems for integration and coordination of the various datasets stored at RERF.

On the final day, March 5, based on the discussions held over the three days, the committee prepared its recommendations and summarized the discussions, followed by a press conference, which was attended by 13 journalists representing 11 media organizations.

At the start of the press conference, Japan SAC Co-chair Dr. Yoshiya Shimada (President, Institute for Environmental Sciences), and U.S. Co-chair Dr. Patrick Concannon (Professor Emeritus, Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine, University of Florida College of Medicine) provided a summary of the three-day discussions to the media.

## **Overview of Scientific Advisory Committee deliberations**

- Under the strong leadership of the Chair and Vice-Chair, information sharing and collaboration among research departments has been enhanced, with further progress in RERF's research anticipated.
- RERF's studies are supported by the cooperation of A-bomb survivors and their children and are built on mutual trust between the participants and RERF.
- The findings resulting from RERF's research have contributed greatly to evidence-based radiation protection policy and have improved healthcare for not only A-bomb survivors but also for radiation workers and people exposed to radiation in medical and environmental settings.
- The Trio Genome Study is an exceptionally innovative study that can only be conducted at RERF. A detailed research plan for the study has been developed, with study methods established and a strong framework of collaboration built across RERF departments and with Japanese and international institutions. In addition, thorough explanations have been made to and informed consent obtained from study participants, with approval for the study granted by the ethics committee. Sufficient efforts have also been made to explain the project to stakeholders, including survivors and the public, resulting in confirmation that the study is ready to begin full-scale analysis.
- Regarding epidemiological research, updates on data registration and interim analysis results related to cancer and non-cancer disease risk among survivors and their children were presented, showing steady progress.
- A new dose-estimation method that considers factors such as age, sex, and anatomical organ information has been developed, with more precise evaluation of radiation effects anticipated.
- Steady progress is being made—in collaboration with multiple

departments within RERF—on the registration of clinical and biosample information into an integrated database developed by the Information Technology Department, with consideration also paid to RERF's future relocation plans. The database is expected to contribute significantly to the planning of future research protocols, establishment of collaborative research systems, and promotion of the smooth conduct of research.

- RERF reported that the relocation of its Hiroshima Laboratory to the Hiroshima University campus has been postponed until FY2026. The relocation is anticipated to lead to personnel exchanges and new collaborative studies with Hiroshima University, further advancing RERF's development.
- RERF is expected to continue making contributions to public health through its scientific research activities.

### **Participants of the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting**

- Dr. Patrick Concannon, Professor Emeritus, Department of Pathology, Immunology and Laboratory Medicine, College of Medicine, University of Florida (Co-chair)
- Dr. Yoshiya Shimada, President, Institute for Environmental Sciences (Co-chair)
- Dr. Jonine Bernstein, Attending Epidemiologist, Co-Program Leader Survivorship, Outcomes and Risk Program, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
- 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. Gen Suzuki, Medical Doctor, Honaigo Medical Clinic, Honaigo

Koseikai Medical Corporation

- Dr. Gayle Woloschak, Professor, Departments of Radiation Oncology  
Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University
- Dr. Melissa Haendel, Director of Precision Health & Translational  
Informatics, Sarah Graham Kenan Distinguished Professor, Professor of  
Genetics and Pediatrics, School of Data Science and Society, Deputy  
Director of Computational Science, NC TraCS, University of North  
Carolina Chapel Hill, Advisor for Research Data Interoperability, UNC  
Health System
- Dr. Fumihiko Matsuda, Director, Center for Genomic Medicine, Kyoto  
University Graduate School of Medicine
- Dr. Fuki Hisama, Professor, Medical Genetics, University of Washington  
School of Medicine
- Dr. Fuji Nagami, Professor, Tohoku Medical Megabank Organization,  
Tohoku University Auditor
- Mr. Takashi Kohno, Certified Public Accountant and Tax Accountant,  
Takashi Kohno CPA Office Observers
- Mr. Masato Yasuda, Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors, General  
Affairs Division, Public Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and  
Welfare
- Dr. Yuta Tsukumo, Deputy Director, General Affairs Division, Public  
Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
- Dr. Ryuichiro Sano, Deputy Director, Office for Atomic Bomb Survivors,  
General Affairs Division, Public Health Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour  
and Welfare
- Dr. Joey Zhou, Senior Epidemiologist, U.S. Department of Energy
- Dr. Cato Milder, Japan Program Manager, Office of Environment, Health,  
Safety and Security, 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, Senior Board Director, Board on Chemical Sciences and Technology, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
- Dr. Daniel Mulrow, Program Officer, Nuclear and Radiation Studies Board, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
- Dr. Ryugo Hayano, Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo (RERF Board of Councilors)
- Mr. Toshio Sano, Former Commissioner of Japan Atomic Energy Commission and Former Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament (RERF Board of Councilors)
- Dr. Masao Kobayashi, Advisor, Japanese Red Cross Society Chugoku-Shikoku Block Blood Center (RERF Board of Councilor)

#### RERF Staff

- Kenji Kamiya: Chair and Representative Director
- Preetha Rajaraman: Vice Chair and Executive Director
- Kazunori Kodama: Executive Director
- Osamu Tanabe: Chief Scientist / Director, Biosample Research Center / Acting Director, Molecular Biosciences Department
- Satomichi Kaneoka: Chief of Secretariat

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