

ACC Coordinating Center Q4 Quarterly Progress Report October – December 2008

Full Report

October Meeting, Beijing, China

A highly productive Fall meeting was held at the start of Q4 in Beijing, China, October 9-10. The meeting was attended by twenty-six ACC members, representing China, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, Bangladesh, India, Thailand, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Cancer Institute, and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Attendees discussed the progress of the individual cohorts, reviewed a proposal for an Asian nutrient database, discussed activation of the Biospecimens Working Group, and addressed a number of operational issues, including funding for the Coordinating Center. The new cohorts, the BMI Working Group, and researchers interested in the nutrient database held additional meetings to discuss progress, challenges and next steps in their respective activities. Complete minutes of this meeting can be found on the ACC website (www.asiacohort.org).

In addition to the Fall meeting, nine ACC members presented their work and highlighted ACC endeavors at the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Organization for Cancer Prevention, October 11-13.

The next ACC meeting will be held in Denver, April 16-17, 2009, in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research. Working group meetings will be held on Thursday, and the general membership meeting will be held on Friday. Please visit the ACC website for the most current information about the [Spring meeting](#).

Executive Committee

New Executive Committee members were elected at the beginning of Q4. The new EC consists of Paolo Boffetta, Kee Seng Chia, Manami Inoue, Daehee Kang, John Potter, and Wei Zheng. In December, a conference call was held to discuss cohort development, future pilot projects, data harmonization, and Coordinating Center (CC) funding. A funding proposal from the CC was submitted to new cohort members of the Executive Committee for review at the close of Q4.

Keun-Young Yoo, ACC Co-Chair, announced that he will be stepping away from his duties as Co-Chair and member of the Executive Committee but will continue his enthusiastic support of the ACC. Dr. Yoo had been co-Chair of the ACC since its inception in 2004. Daehee Kang of Seoul National University in Korea, has graciously accepted the post and will begin serving immediately.

The Executive Committee has scheduled quarterly conference calls throughout 2009 to monitor ACC progress and will meet in Denver in April.

Pilot Projects

We are pleased to report that substantial progress has been made on the BMI Pilot Project. Four new cohorts expressed interest in the BMI Pilot Project during Q4, which brings the total number of participating cohorts to 17 and the total number of subjects to about 1 million with more than 100,000 deaths. The BMI project also received FHCRC IRB approval. During Q4, data were uploaded to the CC-developed LIMS website for the BMI project. The CC will continue to receive feedback from LIMS users as additional data are submitted and make adjustments where necessary.

The BMI Working Group reviewed preliminary analysis with datasets from three cohorts at the Fall meeting. Review of these results led to a series of analysis modifications and discussion of potential secondary analyses. The CC expects to receive additional datasets in January and will focus on pooled analysis and publication preparations during the first two quarters of 2009. The BMI WG is scheduled to hold a conference call in early January and will arrange for conference calls with each participating cohort, as needed. The BMI WG will continue to communicate via conference calls, the email list and portal in the upcoming quarter.

Discussion at the Fall meeting concluded that the BMI pilot project would remain a significant focus, but that the ACC would also begin considering additional pilot projects. Particular interest in a biospecimens project was expressed. Following recommendations made at the Fall meeting, the CC assisted activation of the Biospecimens and Sample Collection Working Group (Biospecimens WG) to lead a future biospecimens pilot project. Chaired by Nat Rothman and Mark Thornquist, the Biospecimens WG held an initial conference call in December to discuss challenges to biospecimens harmonization, the potential function of a round-robin laboratory, and possible pilot projects. The CC anticipates the development of several pilot projects in the coming months.

Alan Kristal's presentation on an Asian nutrient database at the Fall meeting generated considerable interest and raised the prospect of activating the Diet WG. A written proposal is expected in the upcoming quarter and will be distributed to ACC members and interested researchers. The CC will continue to assist the reformation of the Diet WG when the proposal is distributed.

Harmonization Efforts

The harmonization of data collection instruments continues to be a top priority for the ACC. Deanna Stelling of the CC conducted an extensive review of cohort questionnaires and proposed Common Data Elements (CDEs) developed in the past year. Several cohort representatives met at the close of Q4 in Kuala Lumpur to review the proposed CDEs. The CC expects to continue discussion on harmonization with the cohorts in the upcoming quarter, and will assist efforts towards CDE adoption.

The BMI WG and CC also developed harmonized values based on the ICD-9 and ICD-10 codes used by various cohorts participating in the BMI pilot project. The CC will provide harmonization expertise for the BMI pilot project when needed as pooled analysis is conducted.

Communication

The secure members' portal (<https://portal.asiacohort.org>) has grown from thirty-two to forty-three users during the past quarter. At the close of Q4, an average of nine users per day accessed the secure portal to manage documents, track the progress of the BMI project, and view action items from the Fall meeting. The portal and email lists continue to be maintained by the CC and will be expanded as necessary for the Biospecimens and Diet WGs in Q1 of 2009.

Fall meeting attendees discussed releasing information about the ACC to several audiences. Based on this discussion, the CC will begin drafting an ACC brochure for public dissemination. The possibility of a publication as a means of introducing the ACC to the scientific community was also discussed, and will be revisited at the Spring meeting. Although formal external and internal communications plans have yet to be developed, the CC will continue to monitor the need and scope of communications strategies and propose reconsideration to the ACC if relevant.

Cohort Development

The new cohorts, along with the Executive Committee, held a productive meeting in Beijing in October, with the primary aim of addressing harmonization efforts and other issues of particular concern for current ACC cohorts. New cohort representatives expressed commitment towards harmonization between Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. The CC will continue to assist the cohorts in the challenges to harmonization.

The new-cohort packet was distributed to EC members for review in Q4 and will be made available to the general membership once it has been finalized. The packet provides an overview of the ACC, sections on membership, working groups, the BMI pilot project, informatics, data submission, model consent forms, and a set of talking points for cohort use. The CC anticipates revision of this packet as sections such as the biospecimens protocol are completed and as the ACC expands.

Q1 Objectives

The following objectives have been proposed for Q1:

ACC

- Advance an agreed upon, minimum number of pilot projects, including the continuation of the BMI project and the potential for a biospecimens project.
- Continue harmonization efforts amongst the new cohorts

CC

- Begin creation of a complete set of data structures at FHCRC
- Begin development of portal tools to help track progress
- Develop a CC Protocol
- Assist harmonization efforts
- Coordinate the Spring meeting in Denver, CO April 16-17, 2009

*We welcome your feedback and comments.
Thank you for your contributions to the success of the ACC.*