

Report of the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Barrett's Esophagus and Esophageal Adenocarcinoma Consortium (BEACON)

The 3rd annual meeting of the Barrett's Esophagus and Esophageal Adenocarcinoma Consortium (BEACON) was held on May 18th and 19th in Rockville, MD. The meeting agenda is enclosed.

In this two-day meeting, which was supported by funds from the NIH Office of Rare Diseases, the NCI Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, and the NCI Division of Cancer Prevention, 45 scientists from the NCI, NIDDK, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), and academic institutions from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Australia, and Brazil convened to review their on-going scientific projects on esophageal adenocarcinoma (EA) and Barrett's esophagus (BE), to discuss new research ideas, to present the latest developments in laboratory and clinical analysis that may be applied to future consortium projects, and to share their data for pooled analyses.

Individual investigators presented new results from their own studies and discussed interpretations and significance of their findings with other members of the BEACON Consortium. In addition, DCEG investigators reported that using data from seven studies in this consortium, a database was constructed for pooled analyses. Preliminary results for the association between three exposures (smoking, alcohol consumption, and reproductive factors) and EA using data from the pooled database were reported. It is anticipated that other studies would contribute their data for pooled analyses and several publications would result in the next year.

One session was devoted to using new technology in BE and EA research using the BEACON resources. Another feature of this year's meeting was dedicating a session to outstanding questions in BE and EA research. Individual researchers presented their ideas of the most important questions in the field and research ideas to provide answers to these questions were discussed.

Several grant proposals to work on the data and samples available in the consortium have been submitted or are in the final stages of preparation. A R21 grant application to study risk factors for BE among women has been submitted to NIH and is currently under review; the results of the initial review were discussed. Other grant applications to be submitted in the near future will include using high-throughput methods to study genetic susceptibility to EA; examining the association between *H. pylori* and EA; examining the association between obesity and epigenetics in causation of EA; and studying the association between serum insulin-like growth factors (IGF) and EA.

Based on feedback from the participants, the meeting was a great success. The pre-defined goals of the meeting, including sharing new study results, discussing new research ideas, promoting data contribution for pooled analyses, and discussing budget resources to conduct research were all met. Furthermore, with establishing the pooled database and presenting results of analyses on this database, members felt confident that the current collaboration would bear fruit in the near future.