

Nutrition and Cancer Task Force

Report Form 2021

International Collaboration on Nutrition in relation to Cancer (ICONIC)



IUNS
INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF
NUTRITIONAL
SCIENCES

Task Force Chair/s

Professor Alan Jackson, University of Southampton and IUNS International Malnutrition Task Force Chair

Task Force Members

- Dr Alexia Alford, IAEA - Nutrition Specialist
- Dr Kate Allen, WCRF International - Executive Director of Science and Public Affairs
- Dr Marc Gunter, IARC - Head of the Nutrition and Metabolism Department
- Dr Giota Mitrou, WCRF International - Director of Research Funding and Science External Relations
- Professor Martin Wiseman, WCRF International - Medical & Scientific Adviser
- Ms Shalini Jayasekar Zúrn, UICC - Senior Advocacy Manager
- Associate Professor Stephen Wootton - UK NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration

Stepped down in 2021

Dr Kate Allen - WCRF International, Executive Director of Science and Public Affairs

In June 2021, Dr Kate Allen stepped down from the Task Force as a direct participant but intends to remain involved in some activities going forward. Dr Giota Mitrou and Professor Martin Wiseman remain active and continue to represent WCRF. ICONIC has expressed its thanks and appreciation for Dr Allen's key contribution in establishing and developing the Task Force.

Ex-officio: Professor Catherine Geissler, IUNS Secretary-General at International Union of Nutritional Sciences

Has your objective(s) as a task force been modified since the original proposal? If so, please provide brief justification.

No. ICONIC's overall aims and objectives remain as follows:

- Foster a community of clinicians, oncologists, scientists, researchers, patients and the public to share knowledge, understanding and best practice, to jointly deliver high quality research;
- Build capability and capacity in the area of nutrition and cancer to foster excellence in research and practice and ensure continuity into the future;
- Raise awareness of the opportunities to improve prevention and care in people living with and beyond cancer through nutrition; and
- Provide a robust base for public policy to address the increasing burden of cancer.

Have the activities to be undertaken been modified since the original proposal? If so, please provide brief overview and justification.

ICONIC has continued working to build collaboration with and between those interested in the areas of nutrition and cancer. As the Task Force becomes more established and as new opportunities arise, existing activities may evolve, but still fall within the original aims and objectives.

Brief overview of activities since last annual report

Task Force Meetings

Four meetings were held in 2021, in March, June, September and December.

Capacity building in Africa (CANA study)

ICONIC has continued to support the development of a course out of Wageningen University to enhance the skills of investigators from lower-income countries in writing grant applications. A pilot study was conducted early in 2021 as part of Wageningen University's ongoing distance learning programme, offering a chance to evaluate and refine plans for a new course for Africa at an early stage. The Task Force has continued to work with Professors Ellen Kampman and Cora Busstra, as well as a newly formed group of African scientists within the African Nutrition Society - CANA (Cancer and Nutrition in Africa).

CANA is made up of a group of extremely enthusiastic and committed individuals who themselves completed the first pilot course with Wageningen in February 2021 – they subsequently accepted the responsibility of carrying forward the nutrition and cancer agenda in Africa. With support from Wageningen University and ICONIC, CANA proceeded to plan and lead a second pilot course, modified to be sensitive to the African context. The course began in November 2021 and is due to complete in January 2022. The second pilot has so far been a success, and a mid-course evaluation was carried out at the end of November to monitor progress and identify any challenges. The plan is to hold a further two pilot courses across Africa in 2022.

The aim has been to develop an online course to improve grant writing capabilities across Africa in the first instance, with the longer-term ambition to develop a high quality, relevant and context-specific research programme in this region. The group has become clearer about its long-term ambition to develop a large-scale prospective cohort epidemiological study across multiple sites in Africa - to capture the diversity of cancer sites, diversity of dietary patterns, nutritional status and physical activity, with appropriate biomarkers of nutritional status and cancer characteristics. Conceptually, the approach has been modelled on the experience of the EPIC study (European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition). It will serve to extend the range of exposures and cancers captured in the EPIC study, and by using common/similar methodologies, provide an external validation for the approach that will be of common benefit to people across both Europe and Africa, and more widely.

The activity has gained support in principle so far from IUNS, the Nutrition Society and WCRF. WCRF has shown a willingness to explore opportunities for fundraising on the group's behalf, and the Nutrition Society Council has indicated it would be willing to provide support for the participation of a number of fellows on a course. A more detailed business plan is being developed to capture the scale of the ambition and appropriateness of the stepwise approach that will utilise capability and capacity building as a fundamental feature of the process.

This activity will form part of ICONIC's accepted session at the IUNS International Congress on Nutrition in 2022, at which the Task Force will provide an overview of its key activities to date. A proposal has also been submitted for a session at the World Cancer Congress in 2022: **Capacity Building in Africa: Establishing a continent-wide epidemiological study to determine the relations amongst diet, nutrition physical activity and cancer across Africa.** If successful, the session will be chaired by Professor Jackson and proposed speakers include Professor Ellen Kampman, Professor Francis Zotor, Professor Elio Riboli, Dr Sabina Rinaldi and Dr Reginald Annan.

International activity in the area of nutrition and childhood cancers (CTYA activity)

Throughout 2021, ICONIC has continued to gather those interested in nutrition and cancer in children, teenagers and young adults from around the world. It held its first Special Focus Dialogue in April 2021: **Nutrition and cancer in children, teens and young adults: current understanding and future opportunities**. The event was a great success, with nearly 100 individuals participating in the event - very positive feedback was received from these participants, as well as from UICC. ICONIC has since facilitated four further meetings involving this group of experts (in May, June, September and December) and the group is now chaired by Professor Mike Stevens.

The activity, so far, has provided a forum for these experts to participate, share and draw support. We look forward to seeing how they might work together going forward. The group will continue to meet in 2022 and has submitted a proposal for a joint session with WCRF at the World Cancer Congress in 2022: **Nutrition in Children with Cancer: Evidence and Implications**. If successful, the proposed session will be chaired by Professor Mike Stevens and proposed speakers include Professor Wim Tissing, Dr Inge Huybrecht, Associate Professor Elena Ladas and Helen Croker.

UICC has also invited the group to consider a second Special Focus Dialogue focused on this area early next year. A proposal is being developed by the group for a session to be held on 1st March 2022, likely to be under the broad theme of obesity.

Finally, the group has recognised the need for more collaboration in this area in high-income countries and is looking at the possibility of a two-step approach - first offering a consensus statement for current clinical practice, which would be pragmatic and experiential, followed by a more detailed look at the literature (i.e. systematic review, based on resources available).

Prehabilitation in delivery of cancer care

In 2019, following the publication of a report by NIHR in collaboration with Macmillan (a cancer care charity) and the Royal College of Anaesthetists "**Principles and guidance for prehabilitation within the management and support of people with cancer**", ICONIC had committed to exploring opportunities to make these prehabilitation guidelines for people with cancer more widely available and consider how the findings might be projected internationally. The report called for a greater focus on prehabilitation, including nutrition, physical activity and psychological support, in the delivery of cancer care.

On 7th December 2021, the Task Force was pleased to host the second in a series of online Special Focus Dialogues in collaboration with UICC, this one with a focus on prehabilitation and cancer: **Special Focus Dialogue: Prehabilitation – Multimodal interventions to improve resilience and response to treatment in cancer | UICC.** Experts came together to share their experience in developing, implementing and evaluating prehabilitation interventions, including how being nutritionally, physically and psychologically 'unfit' might influence the resilience to cancer and how multimodal prehabilitation can help decrease treatment-related morbidity, increase cancer treatment options, and improve physical and psychological health outcomes – the session was chaired by Associate Professor Stephen Wootton and speakers included Professor Franco Carli, Dr Stefan Van Rooijen and Dr Sandy Jack. The session was a success with participation from over 100 registrants. Plans for the next steps following the event are being considered.

WHO scoping review

In September 2020, ICONIC joined together with the International Malnutrition Task Force (IMTF) to undertake a scoping review for WHO on severe wasting and oedema in infants and children aged six months and over - this was to help propose key questions that the WHO guideline on prevention and treatment of wasting in infants and children would need to address. The scoping review was led by Professor Ann Ashworth-Hill of IMTF, presented to the WHO Guideline Development Group in December 2020 and was an initial step in a formal process of guideline development.

In May 2021, WHO engaged the IMTF/ICONIC review team to undertake another scoping review on fluid management strategies for infants and children >6 months with moderate or severe wasting or oedema, with signs of shock or severe dehydration. This was to further inform the WHO wasting guideline process, to determine if there was sufficient literature to conduct a full systematic review on this area. After further consideration, WHO subsequently asked the team to complete a full systematic review for this research question. The team submitted an interim report in July 2021 and after some further discussion, it was decided the review team should not proceed with the full systematic review.

During 2021, the review team has also been preparing manuscripts for publication, based on these reviews. These will be submitted for publication early in 2022 (journals to be confirmed).

Nutrition and breast cancer in women of African ancestry in LMIC

ICONIC reiterated its ambition to seek opportunities to better understand the likely nutritional mechanisms underlying the poor prognosis for cancer of the breast in women of African ancestry, and develop approaches to improve outcomes, especially in LMIC. While the accepted session on this area for the World Cancer Congress in 2020 did not go ahead due to the global pandemic, ICONIC intends for this planned session to form part of the series of Special Focus Dialogues in collaboration with UICC.

Global Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition

ICONIC is aware of the school feeding initiative launched in 2021 led by the World Food Programme, with Professor Jackson sitting as an observer for IUNS. The Task Force will continue to observe the activity as it develops and see what opportunities there might be to collaborate as the consortium takes a clearer form.

UICC Virtual Dialogues

In collaboration with UICC, ICONIC began hosting a series of Special Focus Dialogues in 2021. These aim to provide opportunities to connect, exchange knowledge, access expert insights, and share solutions on respective and common challenges. So far there have been two successful events:

- **April 2021:** Special Focus Dialogue - Nutrition and cancer in children, teens and young adults: current understanding and future opportunities | UICC

(In the lead up to the event, Rachel Marklew as Project Manager for ICONIC, was invited to prepare a blog for UICC's website to help promote the event: Nutrition and cancer: fostering a global community | UICC).

- **December 2021** Special Focus Dialogue: Prehabilitation – Multimodal interventions to improve resilience and response to treatment in cancer | UICC.

World Cancer Congress 2022

ICONIC has submitted proposals for two sessions at the World Cancer Congress in 2022:

- **Session 1:** Nutrition in Children with Cancer: Evidence and Implications, chaired by Professor Mike Stevens and in collaboration with WCRF International
- **Session 2:** Capacity Building in Africa: Establishing a continent-wide epidemiological study to determine the relations amongst diet, nutrition, physical activity and cancer across Africa, chaired by Professor Alan Jackson

IUNS-ICN 2022

In 2021, ICONIC confirmed its planned session for the International Congress on Nutrition in 2022 - **Supporting better collaboration in nutrition and cancer: A global approach ICN TOKYO (icn22.org)**. The aim of the symposium remains to provide an overview of ICONIC's work and engage with those interested in its activities. Speakers have been preparing abstracts to be submitted by the deadline (March 2022).

Communications / Publications

- **Newsletter**

Two newsletters were published in 2021, in March and October. The newsletter now has over 100 subscribers and once published, is shared with a wider audience via Twitter and other platforms. See links below to newsletters issued in 2021:

- [Spring 2021 ICONIC's Spring 2021 Newsletter \(campaign-archive.com\)](#)
- [Autumn 2021 International Collaboration on Nutrition in relation to Cancer's Autumn 2021 Newsletter \(campaign-archive.com\)](#)

- **Twitter**

ICONIC's Twitter account remained active in 2021 and with now 127 followers, the aim through this social media platform is to continue to engage with interested stakeholders and keep them informed of activities.

- **Website**

[ICONIC's webpage hosted by the NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration \(https://cancerandnutrition.nihr.ac.uk/international-nutrition-and-cancer-task-force/\)](https://cancerandnutrition.nihr.ac.uk/international-nutrition-and-cancer-task-force/) remains live and is updated regularly. The webpage includes a contact form for individuals to get in touch, via ICONIC's active email account (nutritionandcancer@wcrf.org).

- **Other publications in 2021:**

- UICC Blog Nutrition and cancer: [fostering a global community | UICC](#)
- IAEA Nutritional and Health-Related Environmental Studies Newsletter (page 9): [nahres-14-2021.pdf \(iaea.org\)](#)
- The ICONIC/IMTF review team has been preparing manuscripts based on the scoping reviews carried out for WHO, for publication.

Funding

In 2021, ICONIC secured further funding from WCRF, UICC and IMTF, with WCRF agreeing to increase their contribution to 5,000 Euros (from 2,200). IARC also agreed to consider a financial contribution going forward. In addition, the Task Force was invited to undertake further work for WHO, for which it received a fee.

Meetings/Conferences

Members were again proactive in promoting ICONIC at conferences and meetings at which they had a presence during 2021.

Stakeholder activity

ICONIC continued to keep in touch with stakeholders, through the newsletter, Twitter and other forms of communication.

Please list any successes accomplished during this period (aligned with proposed measures of success from original proposal, or include justification for modifications)

Please see below a list of successes for 2021 (details given in the previous section):

- Further progress was made in developing a distant-learning course that would help with grant proposal writing in LMIC. The first pilot course was successfully run as part of Wageningen's ongoing distance learning programme in February 2021, and out of this formed a new group of enthusiastic and committed African scientists within the African Nutrition Society. The group accepted the responsibility of carrying forward the nutrition and cancer agenda in Africa. With support from Wageningen University, later in 2021 CANA offered a second pilot course tailored to the African context and a further two pilot courses are planned for 2022. The activity gained support in principle from a number of organisations, with some potential financial support for the planned pilot studies. The longer-term ambition for this capacity building activity also became clearer, to establish a continent-wide epidemiological study to determine the relations amongst diet, nutrition and physical activity across Africa i.e. an EPIC for Africa.

- Progress was made in enabling collaboration between different international groups interested in the area of nutrition and childhood cancers. In collaboration with UICC, ICONIC hosted a Special Focus Dialogue on nutrition and childhood cancers in April 2021, bringing the groups of experts together for the first time. Following this, these experts have continued to be engaged and expressed an interest in working collaboratively moving forward. A proposal for a session on this area at the World Cancer Congress in 2022 has been submitted, and UICC also invited the group to host a second Special Focus Dialogue in 2022. The group also began considering better collaboration in high-income countries and the possibility of a two-step approach to include first a consensus statement for current clinical practice, which would be pragmatic and experiential, followed by a more detailed look at the literature (i.e. systematic review)
- As part of a review team with IMTF, ICONIC successfully undertook a further scoping review of the evidence on fluid management strategies and prepared manuscripts based on the two reviews completed (the first in 2020) for publication.
- ICONIC hosted two Special Focus Dialogues in 2021 in collaboration with UICC – one on nutrition and childhood cancers, and the other on prehabilitation and cancer. Further proposals were also considered for future Special Focus Dialogues in 2022 as part of the series.
- ICONIC confirmed its session for the next International Congress on Nutrition in 2022. The aim of the symposium will be to provide an overview of ICONIC's work and engage with those interested in its activities.
- Two proposals were submitted for sessions at the World Cancer Congress in Geneva in 2022 – one on the capacity building activity in Africa and one on nutrition and childhood cancers.
- Two newsletters were published in 2021. The newsletter now has over 100 subscribers and Twitter followers have also increased.
- ICONIC was featured in other communications which helped to raise awareness, including an invited blog for the UICC website and also a featured article in IAEA's Nutritional and Health-Related Environmental Studies Newsletter.
- ICONIC secured further funding from UICC and IMTF, and an increased contribution from WCRF for 2021.

- Develop/improve existing communications (e.g. Twitter, newsletter, webpage, information leaflet) to keep stakeholders informed of activity and raise further awareness of the Task Force.
- Identify and secure further funding for activities going forward.

Please mention your plans for the coming year and how they have been adapted based on success to date (if appropriate).

The focus of ICONIC's activity for 2022 includes:

- Continue to support CANA and Wageningen University in the development of an online grant writing course for Africa, with two planned further pilots in 2022 (out of which a number of grant applications may be submitted to WCRF's Regular Grant Programme 2022 funding call). Also continue towards building a series of steps that will create capability and capacity to conduct studies of quality and thence to establish a repository of secure evidence based on standardised and validated methods to determine the relationships amongst, diet, nutrition, physical activity and cancer across the continent of Africa. Finally in this area, develop a detailed business plan to capture the scale of the ambition and stepwise approach, with the view to secure more interest and funding.
- Continue working with expert groups interested in the area of nutrition and childhood cancers in order to facilitate international collaboration and develop important activities – planned activities so far to include a session at the World Cancer Congress (in collaboration with WCRF) if successful, a second Special Focus Dialogue in collaboration with UICC and plans for better collaboration in HIC to include first a consensus statement for clinical practice in this area.
- Following the successful Special Focus Dialogue on prehabilitation and cancer in December 2021, consider next steps for moving this area forward.
- Explore opportunities to progress activity in the area of nutrition and breast cancer in women of African ancestry in LMIC (including further seeking opportunities for funding and a potential topic for another Special Focus Dialogue in the series).
- Continue to observe the Global Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition activity as it develops and see what opportunities there might be to collaborate as it takes clearer form.
- Continue to establish strong stakeholder relationships and seek further opportunities to collaborate. Consider developing an online platform for stakeholders to engage and share information.

- Continue to develop/improve existing communications (e.g. Twitter, newsletter, webpage, information leaflet) to keep stakeholders informed of activity and raise further awareness of the Task Force.
- Identify and secure further funding for activities going forward, and consider the future of the Task Force (including financial sustainability) beyond 2022.



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