

# OUR RESEARCH STRATEGY

## Leading the way in cancer prevention and survival through diet, nutrition and physical activity

World Cancer Research Fund International is a not-for-profit organisation that leads and unifies a network of cancer charities with a global reach, dedicated to the prevention of cancer through diet, nutrition and physical activity. The World Cancer Research Fund network charities are based in Europe, the Americas and Asia.

Our mission is to champion the latest and most authoritative scientific research from around the world on cancer prevention and survival through diet, nutrition and physical activity, so that we can help people make informed lifestyle choices to reduce their cancer risk.

Our analysis of the scientific evidence shows that about a third of the most common cancers in high-income countries, and about a quarter in low and middle-income countries, can be prevented by following a healthy diet, avoiding excess weight and being physically active.

We work with researchers, policymakers, health professionals, representatives from civil society and the media to achieve our research goals to:

- Stimulate and support research and innovation in cancer prevention and survivorship.
- Analyse global cancer prevention and survival research linked to diet, nutrition and physical activity.
- Encourage more scientists to enter the field.
- Disseminate our information through relevant channels (conferences, scientific publications, media coverage).

As an organisation the science work we carry out can be divided into five areas:

- Discovery
- Synthesis
- Capacity building
- Convening
- Partnerships

## Discovery

We stimulate and support discovery by funding high quality and innovative research on the effects of diet, nutrition (including body composition) and physical activity on cancer prevention and survival. We **accept proposals** initiated by researchers and, on occasions, we also commission or request research of particular interest to us.

The scope of our grant programme is defined by research themes, research principles and eligibility criteria. We fund research internationally in any country outside the Americas. Researchers from the Americas can apply to our sister organisation, the American Institute of Cancer Research (AICR), which has its own grant programme.

We revise our research themes every year to ensure they reflect both ongoing and emerging questions of priority in the area of diet, nutrition, physical activity and cancer, both for incidence and survivorship. Our research principles ensure the work we fund is novel, important, relevant and appropriate.



**Figure:** The diagram illustrates the five research themes and the six research principles that are core to the research we fund

More information on our grant programme can be found on our website:

[www.wcrf.org/grantprogrammes](http://www.wcrf.org/grantprogrammes)

## Synthesis

We analyse global research on how diet, nutrition and physical activity affect cancer risk and survival. Our Continuous Update Project (CUP) is an ongoing programme that collates, systematically reviews and interprets the relevant epidemiological research.

In addition, in collaboration with the University of Bristol, we are developing a method to systematically review the mechanistic evidence that might explain observed associations seen in epidemiological studies.

The findings from the Continuous Update Project (CUP) inform the work we do as a network, from our grant programme to our health information programmes. They underpin the information on cancer prevention that we share with the public, researchers and policymakers so that everyone has access to the latest and best cancer prevention advice.

More information on the Continuous Update Project (CUP) and its reports can be found on our website:

[www.wcrf.org/cup](http://www.wcrf.org/cup)

## Capacity building

As a network we prioritise capacity building across a range of areas. We contribute to the professional development of the researchers we fund by encouraging them to explore innovative and important ideas and questions. Over the years our grants have funded PhD students and Post Doctoral researchers to a point in their career where they can apply as Principal Investigators.

We encourage research from lower and middle-income countries, as well as interdisciplinary collaborations that can optimise the impact of the research.

Additionally, through our Academy programme we award fellowships to allow scientists to attend courses and international meetings, and we contribute to educational activities aimed at developing future leaders in the areas of diet, nutrition, physical activity and cancer.

More information on the World Cancer Research Fund Academy can be found on our website: [www.wcrf.org/academy](http://www.wcrf.org/academy)

## Convening

We are committed to disseminating our work and ensuring it reaches a wide audience. We host and attend conferences to present the latest conclusions from our Continuous Update Project (CUP), specific findings from our funded research or recommendations from our policy work. We also sponsor our funded researchers and global experts to present at international conferences on our behalf.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our vision is to live in a world where no one develops a preventable cancer. We strive to make a difference to people's lives by helping people reduce their risk of developing cancer and improving the outcomes of cancer survivors. As a network of cancer prevention charities we do this through our science, policy and health information work.

Using our science as a foundation, we adopt an evidence-informed approach to our policy activity. We collaborate with organisations and governments across the world to encourage and enable them to develop policies for the prevention of cancer and other non-communicable diseases.

We deliver health information programmes to empower people to make lifestyle choices that reduce their cancer risk through the adoption of our 10 Cancer Prevention Recommendations. We work with parents, teachers, health professionals and employers to deliver our message that cancer can be prevented.

Underpinning all this activity is our science work.

More information on our conferences can be found on our website: [www.wcrf.org/conferences](http://www.wcrf.org/conferences)

## Partnerships

We partner with like-minded organisations when appropriate to help us achieve our goals, reach a broader audience and focus on specific priority areas.

**Our collaborations** with Imperial College London and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), as well as through the National Prevention Research Initiative (NPRI), allow our discovery and synthesis work to reach a wider audience.

Similarly, **our partnerships** with organisations such as the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and the World Obesity Federation facilitate our science, policy and convening work.

More information on our research partnerships can be found on our website: [www.wcrf.org/researchpartnerships](http://www.wcrf.org/researchpartnerships)

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

As the world's leading authority on cancer prevention research related to diet, nutrition and physical activity, we work with the foremost global experts in this field. Here's a snapshot of what some of them have to say about what we do.

**"In the fight against cancer there are no geographical borders or frontiers. Science and research are truly international and the World Cancer Research Fund global network is dedicated to funding innovative research into the role of food, nutrition, physical activity and weight management in cancer around the world."**

**Prof Hilary Powers**, Professor, Human Nutrition Unit, University of Sheffield, UK  
*CUP Panel member; Panel Chair Request for Applications (RFA) programme (2009); Grant holder (2000 – 2014)*

**"World Cancer Research Fund has developed this incredible expertise for really summarising the world's evidence on cancer prevention in a way that will transform the field so that we see a faster pace of progress."**

**Prof Stephen Hursting**, Professor in Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA  
*CUP Panel member*

**"Our mission is to develop and share epidemiological knowledge for the prevention and survival of chronic diseases, in particular cancer. Research and health education on genetics, nutrition and physical activity are essential in this endeavour. The World Cancer Research Fund is a key player as it facilitates research in exactly this area."**

**Prof Maurice Zeegers**, Professor in Complex Genetics, Maastricht University, the Netherlands  
*Grant holder (2013 – 2016)*

**"Without World Cancer Research Fund's continuing support we would not have been able to develop this work. World Cancer Research Fund has contributed substantially to our group becoming world leaders in this field."**

**Prof Ashley Cooper**, Professor of Physical Activity & Public Health and Head of Centre, University of Bristol, UK  
*Regular Grant Programme Panel member (2005 – 2011); Grant holder (2007 – 2014)*

**"The World Cancer Research Fund is now actually leading the whole area of research in relation to diet, food, nutrition, physical activity, overweight and obesity. It has a commitment to translate and disseminate the research to motivate people to take action."**

**Prof Tai Hing Lam**, Chair Professor, Head of Department, Department of Community Medicine, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong  
*Corresponding Grant Panel member*

Read more about the experts say about World Cancer Research Fund International and the network: [www.wcrf.org/experts](http://www.wcrf.org/experts)

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