

## **BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (OHSC), 2016–2017**

1. The IARC Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC) is composed of 16 members chosen to represent each laboratory floor, the epidemiology groups, the Biological Resource Centre (BRC), the Latarjet building and the Administrative Services Office (ASO). The OHSC also includes the Staff Physician and the Laboratory Safety Officer.

2. The OHSC met six times during 2016–2017. The minutes of each meeting are posted on the Intranet. A new Laboratory Safety Officer was recruited and appointed as a staff member from September 2017 after staff retirement.

### **A. General well-being**

3. Upon their arrival at IARC, all newcomers (more than a hundred every year) receive a general safety introduction from the Laboratory Safety Officer; newcomers working in IARC laboratories (around 30 every year) receive an additional briefing specifically dedicated to laboratory safety rules and good practice and must fill in a questionnaire on related issues.

4. Growing evidence shows that sedentary behaviour is a significant health risk. During this biennium, the OHSC focused a large part of its efforts on strategies to combat sedentary behaviour during working hours at IARC. The Committee organized a pedometer challenge in the spring, from 13 March to 7 April where groups of five IARC staff could challenge themselves to increase their daily number of steps and compare themselves to the WHO recommendations of 10 000 steps a day. This initiative was a real success, recording 262 participants and 57 782 323 steps. Following a satisfaction survey, a second challenge was organized from 13 November to 8 December, and some riddles were added to the physical challenge (158 participants, 35 202 358 steps).

5. Some IARC staff expressed an interest in receiving first aid training. Three sessions were proposed to all IARC personnel in November 2016: 26 participants were trained by « la Fédération française de secourisme et sauvetage de l'Isère ». This training was subsidized by the Staff Association and the participants covered the balance of the cost.

6. Two flu vaccination sessions were organized by the Staff Physician at IARC: between 50 and 70 persons were vaccinated each year.

7. A new process to notify the Staff Physician and the Laboratory Safety Officer of any incident or accident has been set up. The online declaration concerns all IARC personnel regardless of their status, Group or Section. The collected data will help to establish the cause of incidents and to optimize working conditions.

8. The OHSC recommended to organize the installation of monitoring alarm devices for isolated workers, e.g. for personnel working alone in the basement rooms or in biobank rooms in the BRC building. Five badges directly linked to a call centre were rented and tested for several months. Due to recurrent reception problems and poor uptake of the system the OHSC recommended the installation of security phones in isolated rooms instead.

9. To improve visibility and accessibility, the Staff Physician requested that the defibrillator currently located in the reception cupboard should be moved to the central hall near room R08.

## **B. Laboratories**

10. The OHSC reviewed how to improve the assessment and management of occupational risks at IARC and recommended the creation of a master risk assessment document (as required by French regulations), to provide the basis for concrete action plans to prevent/minimize risk. The means to conduct such an analysis are under investigation.

11. The Laboratory Safety Officer recommended a new laboratory coat design, which will provide better protection, in particular for the wrists and legs. A new set of laboratory coats to work in general laboratories and cell culture rooms was distributed to all IARC personnel working in laboratories in March 2018.

12. For improved risk assessment and follow-up of staff working in the IARC L3 laboratory, the Laboratory Safety Officer and one scientist designed new forms to fill in before and after each experiment performed in the L3 laboratory.

13. As requested by French regulations, a training course was held for new users of the autoclave of the L3 laboratory in November 2017.

14. In October 2017, a recurrent problem of poorly-contained solvent fumes was identified in a laboratory after several complaints about the smell. Using eucalyptus essential oil the Laboratory Safety Officer identified the origin of the problem (confinement of the speedvac instrument under the hood which prevented proper air flow) and corrected it so that the staff members are no longer exposed to solvent vapours.

### *Radioprotection*

15. The agreement to use radioisotopes delivered by the "Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire" is valid until May 2019. The use of radioisotopes has now become very rare. The Iodine 125, used by the Biomarkers Group (BMA), was the only radioisotope used at IARC during 2016–2017. Authorization to work with other isotopes is still available. Rules have been adapted accordingly and every person planning to use radioisotopes should inform the Radiation Safety Officer in advance so that experimental conditions can be properly set up.

*Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) authorization*

16. The agreement to use Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) delivered by the “Commission de Génie Génétique” of the “Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche” is valid until November 2018. This body verifies the proper installation, safe working conditions and proper waste disposal processes depending on the classification of the GMOs used.

*Actions to improve working conditions and to create a safer occupational environment at IARC*

17. An evaluation of the proper functioning of all exhaust hoods, chemical hoods, biosafety cabinets and centrifuges was carried out at the end of 2017, and the consequent repairs undertaken.

18. To enforce good laboratory practice and increase awareness of everyone’s responsibility, the OHSC edited the Medical Research Council Code of Good Health and Safety Best Practice Guide to create the “IARC Code of Good Health and Safety Practice”. The IARC management and laboratory community approved the implementation of the code at the end of 2017.

*Incidents and accidents*

19. Three incidents occurred in laboratories during the biennium: two involved no harm to personnel and one involved a superficial wound. The use of glass pipettes has been discontinued in all IARC laboratories since mid-December 2017. Five work accidents were reported during the period: in an office (1), in the car park (1), on the steps in front of the main entrance to the building (1), a commuting accident (1) and in one lift (1). The circumstances of each accident were evaluated and rectifications made, when appropriate, to prevent associated risks of recurrence.