The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) was established in 1965 as an autonomous body within the World Health Organization and represents an implementation of a French suggestion for an expanded effort in cancer research by industrialized nations. The 1976 budget of $4,200,000 is provided by ten countries: Australia, Belgium, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

IARC’s dual scientific objectives are to identify chemical and biological factors in the environment that may cause cancer in man and to evaluate the carcinogenic hazard of environmental factors revealed by epidemiological or animal studies. There is close integration between laboratory and field investigations. Major programs have included studies of esophageal cancer in Iran (J. Kmet and E. Mahboubi. Science, 175: 846-853, 1972); of liver cancer in Africa and its association with aflatoxin and hepatitis (IARC Annual Reports, 1970-1974); and of Burkitt’s lymphoma in Uganda and nasopharyngeal carcinoma in Hong Kong and Singapore (G. de-Thé et al., IARC Scientific Publication No. 11, 1975).

In the field of chemical carcinogenesis, the Agency is developing collaborative studies on more efficient, rapid screening tests; metabolic studies to assist in extrapolation of data from animal tests to man; and analytical methods suitable for measuring environmental carcinogens. A monograph series on Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risk of Chemicals to Man has been issued since 1972, with 10 volumes now available.

The Agency is housed in Lyon, France, in a 14-story tower block, which provides laboratories and offices. Branches in Teheran, Nairobi, and Singapore facilitate studies of local cancer patterns and environments. Contacts are maintained with national institutes through contracts and joint programs. The Agency also supports a fellowship program which in 10 years has awarded 171 Research Training Fellowships to junior scientists and 221 Travel Fellowships to senior scientists.

IARC’s staff numbers 150 and includes scientists from many countries. John Higginson, M.D. (b. 1922 in Belfast), formerly American Cancer Society Career Professor of Geographic Pathology at the University of Kansas, was and remains the founding director.

Copies of IARC’s Annual Reports are available on request from IARC, 150 Cours Albert-Thomas, 69008 Lyon, France, and from the World Health Organization, Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland.

The cover illustrates IARC’s new building in Lyon, Dr. Higginson, and a group of senior staff members. Left to right: Guy de-Thé, Alex Prichard, Lorenzo Tomatis, Nick Day, Laima Griciute, Allen Linsell, Calum Muir, and Walter Davis.

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M. B. S.