

# Strategies of the WCRF/AICR network to support Early Career Researchers



**Holly Paden, PhD, MS**

*Research Programs Manager  
American Institute for Cancer Research*



**Julia Panina, PhD, MSc**

*Head of Research Funding  
World Cancer Research Fund International*



# Presentation Outline

- WCRF/AICR Network of Charities
- INSPIRE 2023
- AICR ECR Program
- WCRF International
- INSPIRE 2024
- WCRF Academy
- Supporting ECRs in LMICs

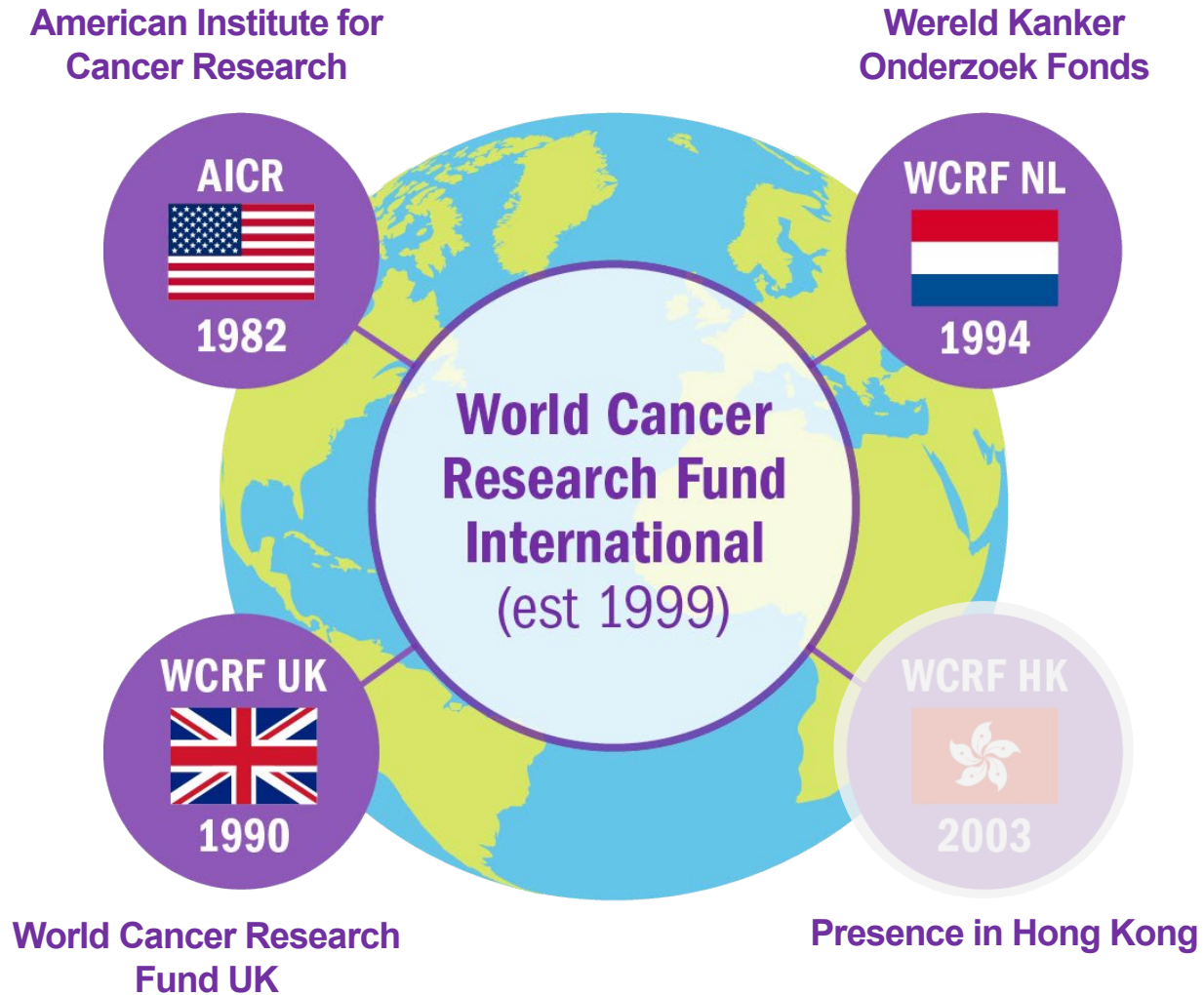
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Cancer  
Research  
Fund



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**The world's leading authority on the links between  
diet, weight, physical activity  
and cancer prevention and survival**

# The WCRF/AICR Network



# WCRF/AICR Mission and Vision

## Box 1: World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research (WCRF/AICR)



### What we do

We investigate the causes of cancer and help people to understand what they can do to prevent it as well as improve survival and quality of life after a cancer diagnosis.

### How we do this



We fund scientific research into the links between cancer and lifestyle, particularly diet, nutrition and physical activity.



We give people practical, easy-to-understand advice about how to reduce their risk of cancer.



We analyse all the research in this area from around the world to ensure our messages are current and based on the most accurate evidence.



We promote collaboration between the nutrition and cancer research communities, and work with governments and decision-makers to influence policy.

# INSPIRE Research Challenge



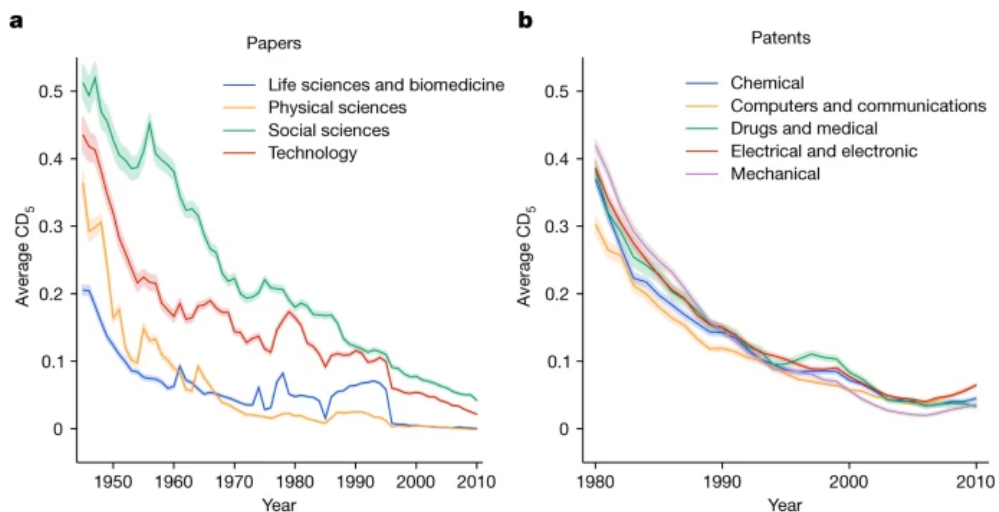
***NEW grant opportunity for Early Career Researchers***

Article

# Papers and patents are becoming less disruptive over time

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-05543-x> Michael Park<sup>1</sup>, Erin Leahey<sup>2</sup> & Russell J. Funk<sup>1</sup> 

**Fig. 2: Decline of disruptive science and technology.**



**a, b**, Decline in CD<sub>5</sub> over time, separately for papers (**a**,  $n = 24,659,076$ ) and patents (**b**,  $n = 3,912,353$ ). For papers, lines correspond to WoS research areas; from 1945 to 2010 the magnitude of decline ranges from 91.9% (social sciences) to 100% (physical sciences). For patents, lines correspond to

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-022-05543-x>

## THE CONVERSATION

Academic rigor, journalistic flair

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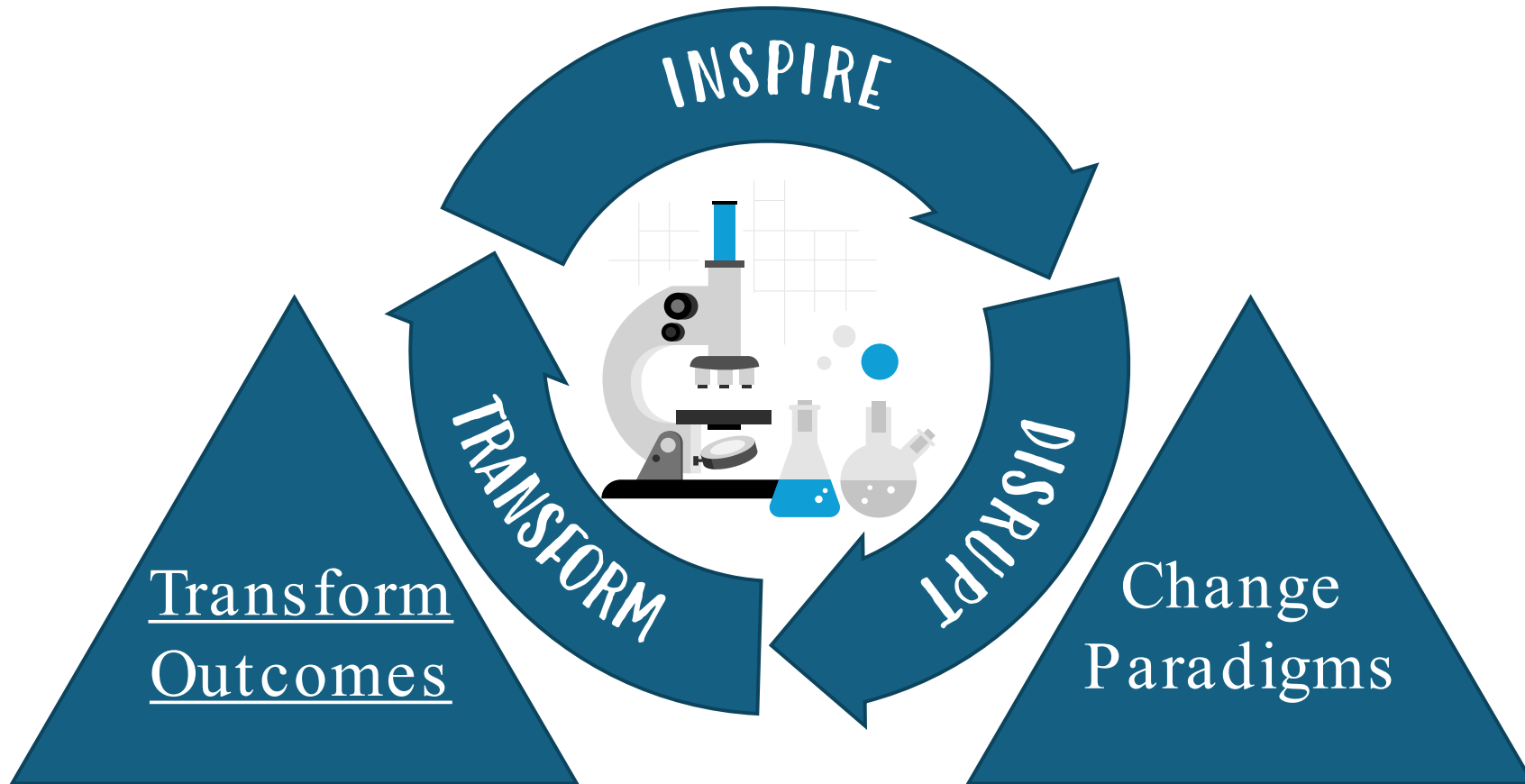


**Want disruptive research? Go small instead of big**

Published: February 20, 2019 7:12pm EST

<https://theconversation.com/want-disruptive-research-go-small-instead-of-big-111737>

# Challenge Dogma...





How long it takes professors to get their first R01/R35/DP2 award  
n = 57, median = 2.8 years, Q1 = 2 years, Q3 = 4 years



<https://visualizedlife.com/time-to-first-r01-level-nih-grant/>

<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/timelines-illustrated>

# INSPIRE Research Challenge 2023

**£397,000  
AWARDED**  
**6 GRANTS**

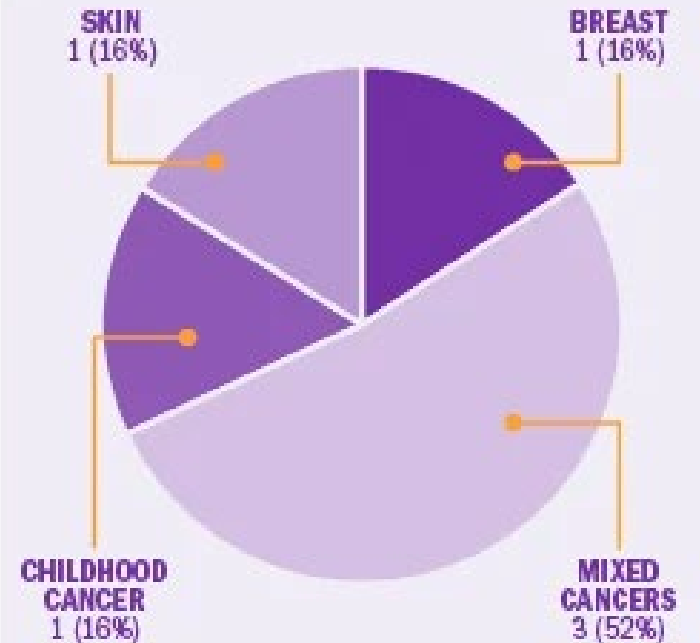
- DENMARK
- GREECE
- HONG KONG
- SPAIN
- UNITED STATES



**33%**  
**CANCER  
PREVENTION**



**67%**  
**CANCER  
SURVIVORS**



**INSPIRE Research Challenge**



# INSPIRE Research Challenge 2023



Shan Luo, PhD, MPH, Bmed  
University of Hong Kong

Exploring the mechanisms  
linking sleep patterns and  
breast cancer risk



Alice Chaplin, PhD, MSc  
Consorcio Centro de Investigación  
Biomédica en Red

Life-S-Can: clinical tool to screen and  
improve cancer survivorship care and  
quality of life



Dong-Woo Kang, PhD, CEP/CET  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

How high-intensity exercise and  
fiber affect immunotherapy  
outcomes for patients with  
melanoma

# INSPIRE Research Challenge 2023



Christos Chalitsios, PhD, MSc  
University of Ioannina

Impact of sleep on the  
development of reproductive  
system cancers



Julie Aarestrup, MS, PhD  
Bispebjerg and Frederiksberg Hospital

Early life infections: pathways to  
prevent adult cancers?



Micah Skeens, PhD, APRN, FAAN  
Research Institute at Nationwide  
Children's Hospital

Using AI chatbots to support  
families of children with cancer

# AICR Investigator-Initiated Research Grants

Accepts applications from the Americas (North America, Central America including the Caribbean and South America).

Applicants must have an academic appointment at the Assistant Professor (or equivalent) level or higher.

New for 2024! AICR Early Career Category

This sub-category of the Investigator-Initiated Research Grant Program is intended to support projects from Early Career Researchers (within 36 months of first academic appointment).

The priority for these awards is to help Early Career Researchers to rapidly address research questions.

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# WCRF International

- WCRF International oversees the scientific activities of the WCRF/AICR network.
- The great success and international reach of INSPIRE 2023 allowed us to continue this grant call, which is now managed by WCRF International.
- We have conducted the INSPIRE Research Challenge 2024 alongside our Regular Grant Programme.



# INSPIRE Research Challenge 2024

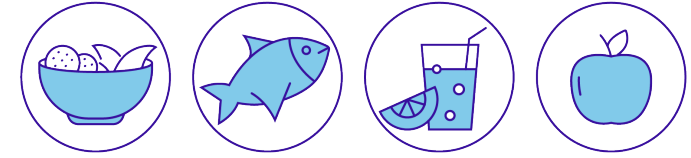
- Primary focus on supporting Early Career Researchers.
- Expanded relevant exposures included sleep, stress, immune function and pathogens, or a combination with nutrition, physical activity or body composition.
- 56 applications received from 24 countries, including 13 from LMICs.
- 19 shortlisted applicants have now submitted a full proposal.

## INSPIRE Research Challenge





# WCRF Academy



- Our commitment to developing future leaders in nutrition and cancer.
- A series of activities including fellowships, webinars, lectures, travel bursaries and conference attendance.
- Started in 2008 as a collaboration Imperial College London, providing fellowships for an intensive Nutritional Epidemiology course to early career researchers from around the world.



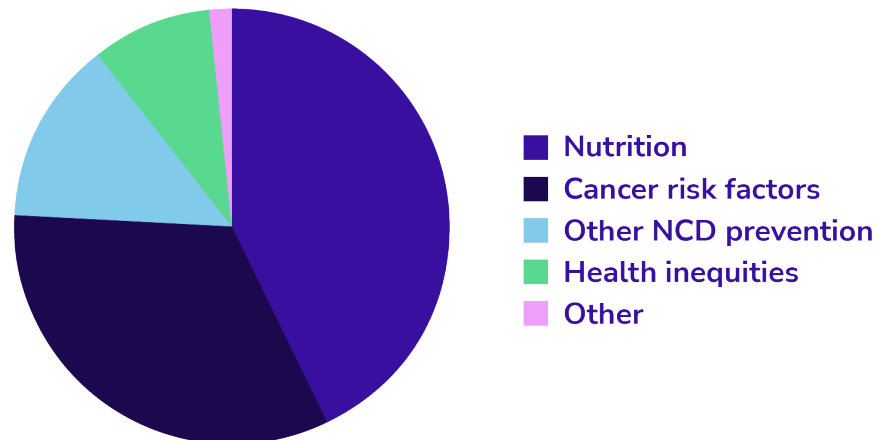
# WCRF Academy Alumni

- A growing network of 41 Academy alumni.
- Researchers from 22 countries, 40% from LMICs.
- Majority (76%) are still working the fields of nutrition and/or cancer.
- Almost half now hold Lecturer or Professor positions.

Academy alumni country of origin



Academy alumni career fields (2023)



# WCRF Academy Impact

- Two of our Academy alumni are now members of the INSPIRE Panel and will be contributing their established expertise to this year's early career applicants.



Prof Kathryn Beck  
Professor of Human Nutrition and Dietetics  
Massey University, New Zealand

WCRF Academy Alumni 2013



Assoc Prof Christina Dahm  
Associate Professor of Public Health  
Aarhus University, Denmark

WCRF Academy Alumni 2009

# WCRF Academy: Next steps

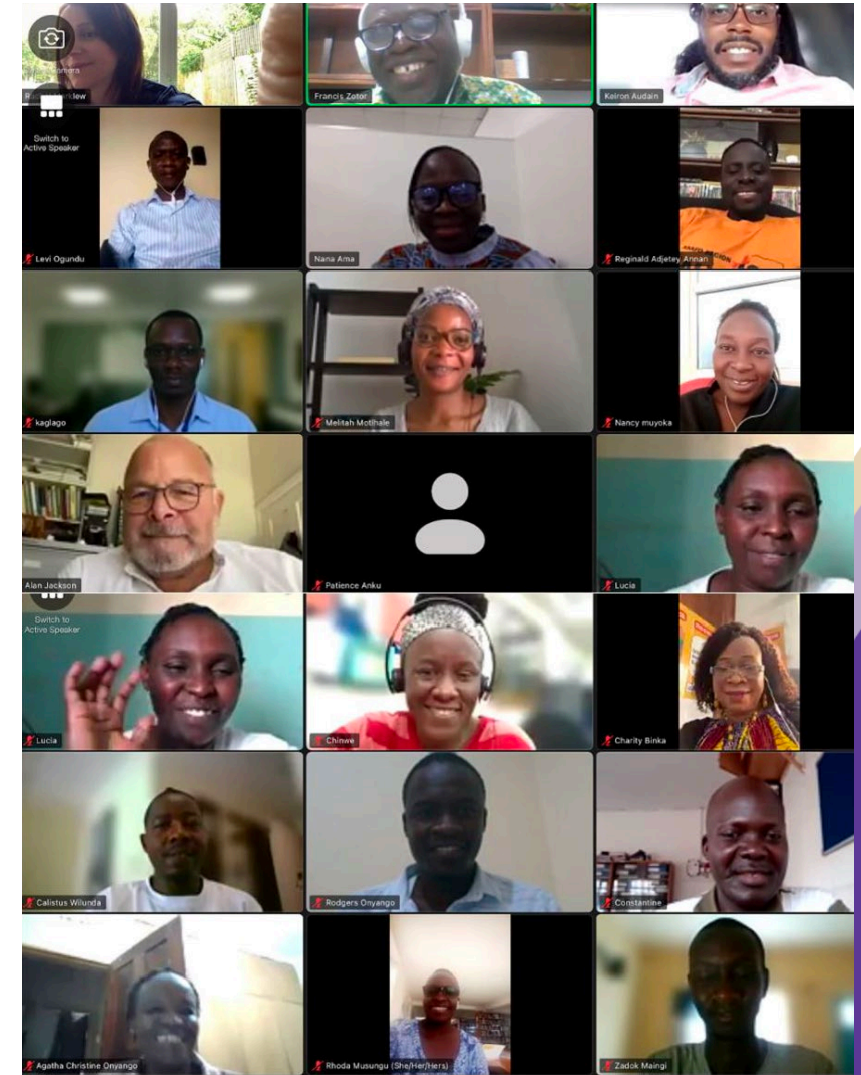
- Engaging with the IARC/CPE Early Career Network
- Planning a webinar to support professional development in research
- Including Academy alumni as part of the WCRF delegation to attend the World Cancer Congress (September 2024)



# Supporting ECRs in LMICs

- WCRF International is a founding member of the International Collaboration on Nutrition in Relation to Cancer (ICONIC), together with UICC, IAEA, IMTF and IUNS.
- To support capacity building incentives, including training of ECRs and building up research infrastructure, ICONIC has established the Cancer and Nutrition Africa (CANA) group.
- CANA is running a training course to improve grant-writing skills of researchers working in Nutrition and Cancer Epidemiology fields in Africa.
- 2023 grant writing course attended by 12 researchers from 5 African countries, and the 2024 call is currently open!

## Graduation Ceremony 2023



**CANCER & NUTRITION FOR AFRICA**

## CANCER AND NUTRITION EPIDEMIOLOGY IN AFRICA: GRANT WRITING COURSE

Course dates: 31 August – 24 October 2024  
Deadline for applications: 14 June 2024



# Thank you!

## Any questions?

Holly Paden      [h.paden@aicr.org](mailto:h.paden@aicr.org)  
Julia Panina      [j.panina@wcrf.org](mailto:j.panina@wcrf.org)

WCRF/AICR Science Teams

Giota Mitrou      Jana Sremanakova  
Nigel Brockton      Rebecca Camenzuli  
Helen Croker      Hebe Naylor

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

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