

# Nutrition and Cancer Task Force

## Report Form 2020

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

Joined September 2020

Dr Steve Wootton, UK NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration

Dr Wootton is Associate Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Southampton, and Deputy Chair of the UK NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration. He has used his experience to lead areas of ICONIC's work, particularly where there has been a shared interest with the NIHR Collaboration. For example, identifying funding opportunities for research and wider organisation and bringing international parties together to make collaborative grant applications within the global arena.

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 2020, in March, June, September and December.

### **Affiliation with the UK NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration**

ICONIC developed out of the recognition of the need to achieve internationally what the NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration is working towards at a national level within the UK. It was established as a mechanism through which it would be possible to bring together wider international expressions of interest in nutrition and cancer that do not fit within the specific NIHR Collaboration's remit. Both recognised the obvious and immediate benefit in securing a formal association, whereby combined efforts to share understanding, stimulate research and raise awareness might improve the nutritional care of people living with cancer.

ICONIC is now affiliated with the NIHR Collaboration following formal invitation from Professor Sam Ahmedzai, Chair of the NIHR Collaboration, in August 2020. ICONIC's work programme has drawn on the experience of the UK Collaboration, in particular in terms of identifying funding opportunities for research and wider organisation and bringing international parties together to make collaborative grant applications within the global arena. Dr Steve Wootton from the UK Collaboration sits on the Task Force, ensuring linkage with the UK Collaboration works efficiently.

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

ICONIC's ambition remains to help bring a stronger structure to working relationships between different groups interested in the area of childhood cancers. A scoping document was developed to capture the range of international activity and a meeting was held in October (involving a group from the Task Force) to plan a way forward. ICONIC subsequently submitted a proposal to UICC to host one of their Virtual Dialogues (Virtual Dialogues | UICC), at which it would aim to bring the different groups together to generate awareness and opportunities to engage. The proposal was accepted and the session will be held in Spring 2021 (date to be confirmed).

### **Nutrition and breast cancer in women of African ancestry in LMIC**

ICONIC has sought 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 those in LMIC. The Task Force was accepted to host a session on this topic at UICC's World Cancer Congress in October 2020, but this was cancelled due to the global pandemic. However, the proposed session will now take place as one of UICC's Virtual Dialogues in 2021 (Virtual Dialogues | UICC) (date to be confirmed).

### **Capacity building – Online grant proposal writing course for LMIC**

ICONIC continued to work with Professor Ellen Kampman from Wageningen University to develop and refine her proposal for a distant learning course that would help with grant proposal writing in LMIC. In 2020, a Working Group was set up to support Professor Kampman in moving this work forward. The group met in December and a three-phase plan was developed. The plan includes conducting a pilot in the first instance (early 2021) to provide clarity about what the course might look like and to offer a practical learning experience for the longer term. Consideration will then be given to how to best use available platforms and the wider experience in this area in planning for the longer term, and finally support will be sought to make the course more widely available. ICONIC also plans to submit a proposal to UICC for a Virtual Dialogue on this topic, as part of a series of sessions proposed for 2021.

## WHO scoping review.

In September 2020, ICONIC joined together with the International Malnutrition Task Force (IMTF) to undertake a scoping review for the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO's Department of Nutrition and Food Safety, in collaboration with the Department of Maternal, Child, Adolescent Health and Ageing, had called for authors to review available evidence to identify key issues in the prevention and treatment of wasting in infants and children. IMTF/ICONIC's proposal for reviewing one of the four areas identified, was successful. Led by Professor Ann Ashworth-Hill, they together conducted a preliminary search of the evidence on severe wasting and oedema in children aged six months and over (the scoping review was dependant on the depth of WCRF's experience, with the principles of their systematic approach applied). The review was used to propose key questions that the guideline on prevention and treatment of wasting in infants and children would need to address and was presented to the WHO Guideline Development Group in December 2020. This was an initial step in a formal process of guideline development and there may be a subsequent call for a more formal systematic review of the literature. ICONIC will consider the opportunity to engage in this next stage of the process if it arises.

Joining with IMTF brought together capability in two areas for an important purpose and also helped bring the task forces to the attention of the international community.

## Prehabilitation / GACD funding call

Last year, ICONIC had committed to explore opportunities to make the guidelines on 'Prehabilitation for People with Cancer' (from The Royal College of Anaesthetists, Macmillan Cancer Support and the NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration) more widely available and consider how the findings might be projected internationally. The report called for changes to the delivery of cancer care across the UK, with a greater focus on prehabilitation including nutrition, physical activity and psychological support. In 2020, the original application to the GACD funding call did not ultimately meet the terms and conditions of the funding body and it was suggested the project might be better suited to MRC funding streams. The ambition was to introduce (through implementation science research) an intervention on diet and activity in relation to prehabilitation - initially in Jamaica through the University of West Indies (UWI) and the University Hospital of the West Indies - and look to extend capability across the region. In addition, build a collaborative implementation research partnership that would extend beyond prehabilitation. An outline proposal was put together for consideration by MRC and a full application will be submitted going forward if successful.

## World Cancer Congress 2020 / UICC Virtual Dialogues

ICONIC was due to host a session at the 2020 World Cancer Congress (WCC) in Oman, focused on 'Nutrition and breast cancer in women of African ancestry in LMIC'. However, due to ongoing uncertainty surrounding the global pandemic, UICC made the decision to cancel the Congress. UICC subsequently launched a Virtual Dialogues series, which aims to provide its members with enhanced opportunities to connect, exchange knowledge, access expert insights, and share solutions on their respective and common challenges. ICONIC was invited to host a Virtual Dialogue on the topic of nutrition and breast cancer originally proposed for the WCC, and this will be one of a series of Virtual Dialogues hosted by ICONIC as part of its activity in 2021.

## IUNS ICN 2021

ICONIC's proposal for a symposium at the IUNS International Congress of Nutrition in Japan in 2021 was successful (now postponed to 2022). The aim of the symposium will be to provide an overview of ICONIC's work and engage with those interested in its activities.

## Communications

- Logo – a logo was developed and agreed by the Task Force, for use in external communications and to help build its profile and recognition (see logo in newsletter links below).
- Newsletter – ICONIC published its first newsletter in February 2020, with two further newsletters in June 2020 and October 2020. The newsletters included a series of introductions from members of the Task Force (so far including WCRF, UICC and IAEA), as well as other news and features related to its activity. The newsletter now has nearly 100 subscribers and once published it is also shared with a wider audience via Twitter. Please see links below to the published newsletters:

Welcome to ICONIC's first newsletter! ([mailchi.mp](#)) (February 2020)

ICONIC's Summer Newsletter ([mailchi.mp](#)) (June 2020)

ICONIC's Autumn Newsletter ([mailchi.mp](#)) (October 2020)

- Twitter

ICONIC's Twitter account remained active in 2020 and reached over 100 followers. The aim through this social media platform is to engage with interested stakeholders and keep them informed of activities, as well as increase awareness of the Task Force.



- Website

Previously, the NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration agreed to host webpage for ICONIC on their website in the absence of resource to create its own website (<https://cancerandnutrition.nihr.ac.uk/international-nutrition-and-cancer-task-force/>). The webpage includes a contact form for people to get in touch, and this information is sent to the Task Force's active email account. The web content will be reviewed early in 2021 to include information about ICONIC's work programme.

### Funding

ICONIC secured further funding from WCRF and UICC for 2020. In addition, the Task Force was successful in a bid to undertake a scoping review of the evidence on severe wasting for WHO (see above), for which it received a fee. It also explored other opportunities for funding, including the GACD funding call and a programme grant under the MRC Applied Global Health Research Board.

### Meetings/Conferences

Members were again proactive in promoting ICONIC at conferences and meetings at which they had a presence during 2020, although this was mainly online.

### Stakeholder activity

ICONIC continued to keep in touch with stakeholders, through the newsletter, Twitter and other forms of communication. It also began considering options for developing and hosting an online platform for stakeholders to communicate and share information.

## 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 2020 (details given in previous section):

- ICONIC became formally affiliated with the UK NIHR Cancer and Nutrition Collaboration and joined together for a number of activities with mutual interest and benefit.
- The Task Force made progress and steps towards enabling collaboration between different international groups interested in the area of nutrition and childhood cancers. A proposal was accepted to host a session as part of UICC's Virtual Dialogues to bring these groups together.

- Progress was made in supporting Professor Ellen Kampman to develop her proposal to for a distant learning course that would help with grant proposal writing in LMIC. A plan was made for going forward, to include a pilot in 2021 to provide clarity about what the course might look like and to offer a practical learning experience for the longer term.
- Together with IMTF, ICONIC successfully undertook a scoping review of the evidence on severe wasting and oedema in children aged six months and older. Joining with IMTF brought together capability in two areas for an important purpose and also helped bring the task forces to the attention of the international community.
- ICONIC agreed in principle with UICC to host a series of Virtual Dialogues in 2021 to cover different areas of activity related to the Task Force. Proposals submitted for sessions on CTYA activity and nutrition and breast cancer were agreed, with further proposals to be submitted in 2021 for additional sessions.
- The Task Force was successful in its proposal to host a symposium at the next International Congress on Nutrition (now 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.
- ICONIC published its first newsletter (and two subsequent issues) in 2020 to keep interested stakeholders informed of its activity and also raise awareness of the Task Force. It also published a logo for use in external communications and increased its number of followers on Twitter.

## **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 2021 includes:

- To follow on from activity and progress in 2020, plan and deliver a series of online sessions as part UICC's Virtual Dialogue series (to include sessions on CTYA activity, nutrition and breast cancer, capacity building).
- Continue working towards bringing together different groups interested in the area of nutrition and childhood cancers (CTYA activity) in order to facilitate international collaboration and develop important activities in this area.
- Continue to support Professor Ellen Kampman in developing and implementing an online course for grant proposal writing – to include a pilot early in 2021, considering funding opportunities and planning for the longer term.
- Progress activity in the area of nutrition and breast cancer in women of African ancestry in LMIC (including further seeking opportunities for funding).
- Continue to establish strong stakeholder relationships and seek further opportunities to collaborate. Consider developing online platform for stakeholders to engage and share information.

- 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.