



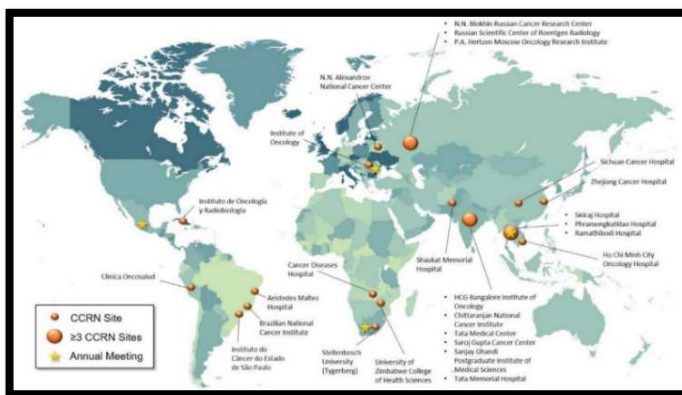
AECA Accelerates U.S.-Eurasian Gynecological Cancer Research

AECA maintains a broad portfolio of programs across the cancer continuum. A growing component of that work has focused on gynecological oncology due to increasing prevalence, rising stakeholder interest, and alignment with leading global cancer control organizational initiatives, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

Worldwide there are nearly one million diagnosed cases of gynecological cancer every year.

Research Infrastructure

Recognizing the mounting importance of addressing the most pressing topics in gynecological cancer, AECA has been building international partnerships and programs to achieve substantial research and treatment innovations. The Cervical Cancer Research Network (CCRN), a multi-national, multi-institution consortium focused on improving cervical cancer outcomes worldwide, initially did not have a Eurasian research platform and thus was missing a crucial segment of the population with high incidence in reproductive cancers.



Global network of CCRN participating research sites.

AECA developed the infrastructure necessary for Eurasian partners to join this effort and introduced CCRN to Eurasian operations. As a result, CCRN was able to initiate several cervical cancer studies on AECA’s partner platforms. Currently, Eurasian institutions represent four of the 27 approved CCRN sites.

By expanding research efforts to the Eurasian region, CCRN is able to capture valuable data which is used to compare international efforts and outcomes, as well as optimize the most effective cancer management techniques. One CCRN trial in particular, a randomized phase III trial comparing radical vs. simple hysterectomy and pelvic node dissection in patients with low-risk early-stage cervical cancer (the SHAPE trial), has enrolled hundreds of patients from the Eurasian sites and is influencing how global clinicians weigh the risks and benefits of various surgical treatment options.

Following on this successful CCRN initiative, AECA aligned and expanded research strategies through formal arrangements with the International Gynecological Cancer Society (IGCS) and some of the largest Eurasian societies, based on a shared vision and commonality in gynecologic oncology. With strategic partnership agreements in place with several Eurasian nations, AECA and IGCS are able to leverage the engagement of regional cancer control leaders to increase the sharing of resources and develop solutions to the many issues facing gynecologic cancer patients and professionals around the world. More regional countries surrounding the Eurasian perimeter, such as Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus, are anticipated to join as gynecological oncology training, education, and clinical progress achieved through the partnership has been unparalleled in the territory.

Virtual Learning & Engagement

**VIRTUAL
TUMOR
BOARDS**

100+
SESSIONS
HELD

300+
EURASIAN
ATTENDEES

AECA and IGCS’s multifaceted approach to partnership and programmatic development allow both global and Eurasian regional experts to benefit from knowledge exchange and collaborative research that reinvents the way nations approach gynecology practices and policies. Through recurring virtual tumor boards – hosted on the ECHO platform and led out of independent Eurasian countries – international oncologists discuss the latest trends in cancer care, develop new inroads for basic and clinical research opportunities, and provide optimal treatment to cancer patients. Sessions focused on gynecological cancers also allow for the exchange of experiences between specialists and introduction of new technologies into clinical practice. As an example, Eurasian participants from a longstanding AECA organizational partner recently presented on a technique for examining sentinel lymph nodes in endometrial and cervical cancer, as well as updated approaches to the use of videoendoscopy in oncogynecological tumors – both of which could transform the standards on gynecological diagnosis and treatment in the region and more universally.

Based on these targeted educational efforts, broader gynecological oncology congresses are held bi-annually to discuss the most pressing topics, and routinely draw interest from hundreds of attendees from across the globe, providing U.S., Eurasian, and other international collaborators with an opportunity to reach unique sample populations, study the complex etiology of gynecological cancers, and open new joint research studies to combat some of the deadliest cancer types.



U.S. and Eurasian medical experts explore the latest trends in gynecological diagnostic and surgical practices

Cancer Control Plans

Several successes in Eurasian gynecological oncology efforts stem from years of both awareness and capacity building. After working with national leaders to design comprehensive cancer control plans, AECA united Eurasian and international stakeholders, including those from WHO, UICC, and the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI), through the Central Asia Cancer Control Leadership Forum. This served as an opportunity to present Eurasian cancer control plans to the international community, as well as solidify commitments to improve public health initiatives throughout the region. As a result, several Eurasian nations have made significant investments in their gynecological cancer research, prevention, and treatment efforts – ensuring Eurasian stakeholders could be successful global partners in educational exchanges and innovative scientific research endeavors. Following on this success, AECA, jointly with NCI, used the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) platform on an annual basis to further disseminate novel scientific findings the Central Asian and Eastern European regions.



AECA Executive Director Dr. Sophia Michaelson with Eurasian cancer control leaders at the ESMO Congress in Barcelona, Spain

Cervical Cancer Prevention

Due to the increased global recognition that Eurasian nations maintained sufficient cancer control capacity as developed and promoted by AECA, WHO selected Uzbekistan as a pilot site to comprehensively address cervical cancer, given the high incidence. AECA, jointly with the Uzbekistan National Cancer Institute and national leaders, began working on an HPV vaccine campaign to combat a viral infection that causes nearly all cervical cancer cases. With support from UNICEF, the campaign was implemented in schools and clinics, as well as through mobile teams to ensure girls in all regions and districts received the vaccination. Within just a few months of launch, coverage of the first HPV vaccination dose had already reached 92% of 10-year-old girls. AECA's work throughout the Central Asian perimeter, with a particular focus on Uzbekistan, contributed to WHO's overwhelming success in the region.



Ovarian Cancer Priorities

As the second most common gynecological cancer, ovarian cancer has become increasingly of interest to the global cancer control community. Understanding the need and urgency to address the most burdensome malignancies, AECA joined participating stakeholders in support of the *Every Woman Study*, specifically in the inclusion of Central Asian cancer control leaders in the effort to further increase the diversity of populations that will contribute to the global research project. The World Ovarian Cancer Coalition (WOCC) is expanding coverage to survey ovarian cancer survivors primarily in low- and middle-income countries and in low-resource settings within high-income countries, with objectives to: capture national and regional data on a range of key patient experience issues that will provide direction on clinical practice and advocacy efforts; create catalog of comprehensive baseline data to increase comparability within and between nations; and increase opportunities to publish key findings to add to the ovarian cancer knowledge base.



AECA and IGCS formalize strategic gynecological oncology partnership efforts across the Eurasian region

In 2020, the WOCC conducted an online study in which 1,531 women from 44 countries participated, providing key global evidence of women’s experience with ovarian cancer and indicated priorities for action. Based on the Eurasian infrastructure and capacity building spearheaded by AECA, representatives from across the Central Asian perimeter were invited to participate in the event and serve on the oversight committee. AECA organizational partners have been responsible for the recruitment of women from upper-middle income locations (Kazakhstan) as well as low-income locations (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan).

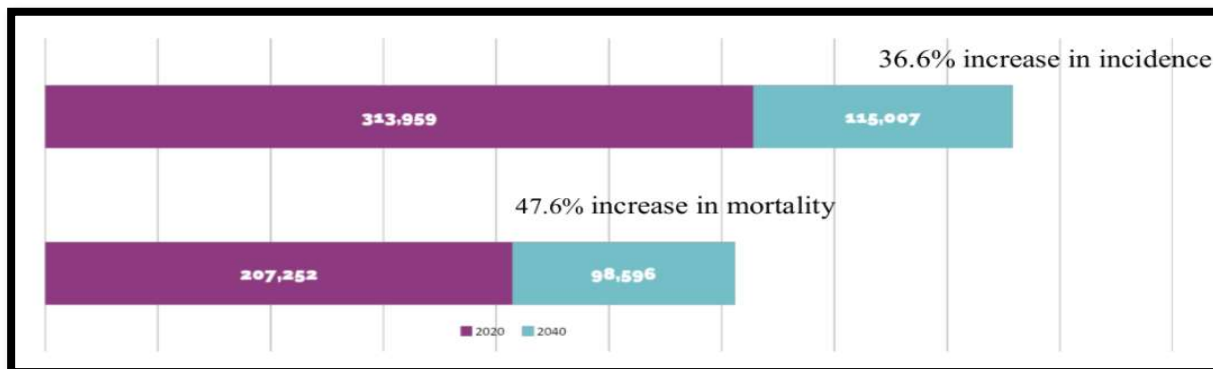


We need a complete picture of the reality of ovarian cancer for women living in lower income countries. It is our ambition that this Study will reveal the challenges and perspectives of these often-neglected women.

Frances Reid
Program Director, WOCC

Building on population research, clinical studies based out of Central Asian and Eurasian countries have also shown tremendous scientific success. AECA recently served as a catalyst to next-generation ovarian cancer therapy research which was initiated in the Eurasian region and will plan to shift to the United States for additional testing and innovations. Ovarian cancer ranks fifth in cancer deaths among women, with tens of thousands of new cases being diagnosed each year. More than three-fourths of ovarian cancer patients aren't diagnosed until the malignancy has become advanced, greatly reducing survival rates. Consequently, innovative pharmaceutical treatment techniques are imperative to provide these women with a chance to survive. In this research endeavor, AECA is initiating programmatic efforts with leading biotechnology companies, in the U.S. and abroad, to further advance treatment options for the global cancer control community.

GLOBOCAN OVARIAN CANCER PROJECTIONS TO 2040



Research Publications

As a result of multiple work streams across cancer sites and geographic locations, AECA proudly hosts a listing of related scientific publications produced by partner organizations in leading peer-reviewed journals, such as the *International Journal of Gynecological Cancer* (IJGC), *The Lancet*, and *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. Eurasian gynecological oncology experts were also invited to serve as reviewers of IJGC, an important step toward joint scientific cooperation. Currently, new publications from AECA clinical experts are being prepared on recurrences of uterine sarcomas and radical trachelectomy for cervical cancer.

A few of the most noteworthy examples of recent international collaboration between U.S. and Eurasian scientists on innovative gynecological research include:

- **Intracardiac Intravenous Leiomyomatosis Case Study:** detailed documentation of the diagnosis and management of a large uterine tumor
- **Chemotherapy Plasmid Encoding for Ovarian Cancer:** successful research on treatment options for advanced platinum-resistant ovarian cancer
- **International Radical Trachelectomy Assessment (IRTA) Study:** group from 13 nations – including the U.S. and several Eurasian countries – compared patient survival outcomes following minimally invasive cervical cancer surgical treatment

Next Steps

Based on evolving stakeholder priorities, and aligned with WHO guidelines, AECA will continue to work with world-renowned organizations focused on gynecological oncology and navigate opportunities to expand diverse research and educational activities throughout the Eurasian region. AECA has developed comprehensive plans to further cultivate gynecological programs and policies with Eurasian stakeholders in 2022 and beyond. With many promising advancements forthcoming, AECA is focused on increasing the universal cancer care knowledge base and improving treatment outcomes for women around the world.

**PARTNER
PUBLICATIONS**

100+

PARTICIPATING
RESEARCH
ORGANIZATIONS

70+

SCIENTIFIC
TOPICS
PUBLISHED