

Editorial

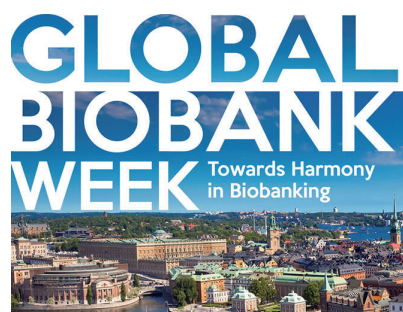
Dear colleagues,

we have introduced you to our new project German Biobank Alliance (GBA) in our last edition. Meanwhile, the activities in all work packages are in full swing and have yielded already initial results. Here we report about some highlights - and if you like, you can deepen this information on our new website <http://bbmri.de/>, which has been launched this week! The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) very recently acknowledged the rapid progress and once again gave us valuable input for further strategic directions.

After having organised GBA internally in the first few months, we now want to involve the biobank community more closely in all our activities. The new website will contribute to this, as will the 6th National Biobank Symposium in Berlin in December and, last but not least, this newsletter. There will be a change in the format of the newsletter. This will be the last newsletter in PDF format. The following issues will be published online on our website. In order to receive the newsletter in the future, we would like to ask you to register on <http://bbmri.de/>, so that we can keep you up to date. We are looking forward to a lively exchange!

Michael Hummel & Cornelia Rufenach

Topics



Global Biobank Week

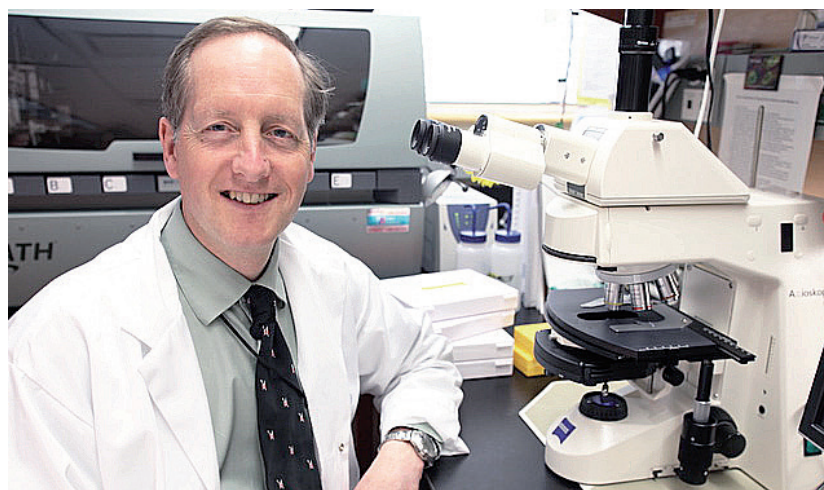
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"If we believe in raising the quality and standards for biobanking, it's not enough to just make better professional biobanks"

The German Biobank Node is planning to launch a training platform for biobank education in cooperation with the Canadian Office of Biobank Education and Research (OBER) at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Peter Watson, Director of OBER, is sharing his insights on how biobank training and education works.



What are the biggest challenges in biobank education?

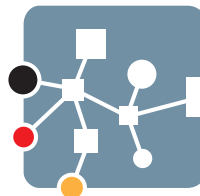
Biobanking is becoming professionalised, which is why we have a need for specific training and education for people who do biobanking. I think the challenge is to come up with an appropriate spectrum of education for the range of individuals who do biobanking. Due to the way research funding works in North America, we have a situation where the majority of research labs does their own biobanking. They get a grant and create their own collection. Gradually over time, academic institutions have set up institutional biobanks. Currently, we have this broad spectrum of biobanks and people with a variety of backgrounds working there - from a research grad student, to a technician in a research lab, to an institutional biobank professional. The challenge for education is to come up with appropriate content and delivery methods to support all those individuals. That's why we started OBER. Our mission is to improve the ability of researchers to conduct high quality health research that utilises human biospecimens.

How do you address the different educational needs?

We feel it is important to offer solutions for all individuals who are doing biobanking in the research arena, not only for professionals in large biobanks. Our content approach has been to create a modular design with specialised modules that relate largely to peoples' roles in biobanking and less complicated overview modules that are targeted towards individuals in research labs. We've now moved on to creating new specialty modules that speak the language of the target groups (i.e. researchers) even better. Recently, we've taken our current self-paced online education and turned it into a 6-week university certificate online course. Students from all over the world participate in the program.

How does OBER support better biobanking?

When we started OBER in 2011 we saw a need for an entity that would improve the process of biobanking across all health research, initially in our province, then Canada and inter-



nationally. But how do you provide services, education, tools and advise for researchers to do a better job with their biobanking? Professional biobanks have the expertise but are only part of the equation. In Canada, probably 90 percent of biobanking is conducted by researchers in their labs, clinical studies, and trials. That's the reality, let's face and address it. If we believe in raising the quality and standards for biobanking, it's not enough to just make better professional biobanks. We need to encourage researchers to use professional biobanks or get researchers to adopt standards, or better both. The best way to do this is to communicate why standards are important and provide ways that help researchers adopt them or find biobanks to do their biobanking.

GBN is planning to adapt part of the online education program that you developed in OBER for Germany. How will the cooperation look like?

OBER has developed online education tools that can be adapted with partners through customised portals that conform to local approaches. Our education modules are focused on "why you should care", "what can go wrong" and "where do you find standards" and can thus be integrated as foundational components into any quality and standards implementation scheme. All the contents and tools were developed through a national grass roots process and were subject to international review, critique, and improvement. OBER has significant experience in delivering online biobanking education course

materials as standalone education or as education linked to standards improvement processes such as exams and document verification processes which we will adapt to a customised German version of the education course. This way, GBN is able to integrate their experience in research biobanking that could be harnessed to create new content, enhance the quality and breadth of the materials, and reduce the cost of maintaining and updating over time.

Interview: Wiebke Lesch & Cornelia Rufenach

About OBER

University of British Columbia

Office of Biobank Education and Research (OBER)

OBER provides support for biobanks through education on biospecimen science and communication of best practices and standards for biobanking.

<http://pathology.ubc.ca/education-resource/ober/>

Biobank Resource Center (BRC)

OBER in partnership with the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (CTRNet) established the Biobank Resource Centre (BRC) which promotes biobanking by providing resources, services, and tools.

<http://biobanking.org/>

GBN launches survey on training needs for technical biobank employees

Qualified personnel is the key to a successful biobank. As advanced training for technical biobank staff is currently not available on a national level, GBN wants to create a further training platform, in Work Package 6 under the direction of PD Dr. Sara Nussbeck and in cooperation with OBER/BRC (see interview). For this we need your help! In order to ensure that the content is tailored to the needs of German technical experts, we have developed a survey for biobank employees. It will run in November 2017. Join in!

BBMRI-ERIC

Erik Steinfelder appointed new Director General of BBMRI-ERIC

Erik Steinfelder was appointed as the new Director General of BBMRI-ERIC. He succeeds Professor Jan-Eric Litton, who has held this role since 2014.

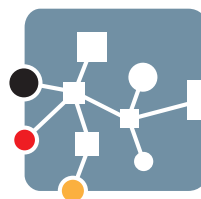
Steinfelder's vision for BBMRI-ERIC in the coming years is to "build and strengthen value-added sustainable biobanking for all stakeholders". His work will focus on developing and marketing a new value proposition and intensifying existing biobank connections. At the same time, he will also place greater emphasis on phar-

ma, clinics, patients and the industry to expand different forms of cooperation. Another focus area will be the importance of biobanking for precision medicine.

Before starting his new position at BBMRI-ERIC Steinfelder has worked for Thermo Fisher Scientific, a multinational biotechnology product development company based in the US. In his role as Biobank Commercial Leader of the EMEA region, he was responsible for Thermo Fisher Scientific's entire biobank portfolio. In 2017



he was appointed Corporate Account Executive. He was also President of the ESBB between 2014 and 2017.



German Biobank Node / German Biobank Alliance

Scientific Advisory Board of German Biobank Node acknowledged dynamic start of the project

The first meeting of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the German Biobank Node (GBN) took place in Berlin on the 29th of September. The SAB members Fay Betsou, Dominic Allen, Kristian Hveem, Johann Eder, Gianluigi Zanetti, Kurt Zatloukal reviewed the progress of the German Biobank Alliance (GBA) project and discussed milestones and hurdles 5 month after the start of the project.

Topics concerning key numbers of the GBA biobanks, the role of GBN in BBMRI-ERIC, IT tools, Stakeholder Management activities and Public relations as well as development of a quality management concept were discussed with great enthusiasm. The SAB gave a very positive feedback on the results and progress. Especially achievements within the work packages for quality management and IT were considered as important steps towards a successful conduction of the project.

The SAB strongly recommended establishment of a biobank IT network that is tailored to the user's



The Scientific Advisory Board of the German Biobank Node (from left to right): Kristian Hveem, Fay Betsou, Johann Eder, Gianluigi Zanetti, Dominic Allen, Kurt Zatloukal

needs. Current national as well as international biobank directories are insufficiently populated and barely used for sample requests. Therefore, the GBA biobanks should be developed into an biobank IT network that provides fast and precise replies based on (local) sample level data in order to allow cross-biobank collections supporting biomedical research. The SAB praised the developed user

satisfaction query and encouraged the team to gather also information from users who could not be served by the biobanks to improve the portfolio. Overall, the SAB was impressed by the rapid starting phase of GBA and the results which have been achieved so far. The discussions raised valid advice and provided excellent recommendations which will be translated into tangible products

Global Biobank Week

Towards harmony in biobanking

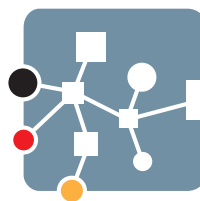
From 13 to 15 September 2017, the Global Biobank Week took place in Stockholm. The event was a great success, bringing together more than 850 attendees from 5 different continents to engage in discussions and work on different topics revolving around the congress motto "Toward Harmony in Biobanking". BBMRI-ERIC, ESBB and ISBER joined forces to host this first edition of the Global Biobank Week that brought together biobanking experts, scientists, policy makers and patient representatives. Together, they discussed future challenges for biobanking, such as global harmonization, best practices, reproducibility of data from specimen research, donor

rights and public trust. "Harmonisation in biobanking is particularly topical as biobanks are gaining increasing recognition as crucial infrastructures for research. However, there is still a lot to do in order to steer the community towards homogeneous practices", states Prof Jan-Eric Litton, former Director-General of BBMRI-ERIC.

"If you think biobanking is about hoarding, you are doing it wrong. Unlock the value and start sharing now", was one of the key messages from Greg Simon, President of the Biden Cancer Initiative and keynote speaker at Global Biobank Week 2017. In his talk he was sharing his perspective on how to

create more awareness for biobanking and make better use of biospecimens in research by finding the right touch-points to reach people or creating vocabulary that stakeholders can relate to. Many conference sessions thus covered the issue of financial, operational, and social sustainability in modern biobanking which has become one of the central themes for biobanks in the last few years.

Next year, European Biobank Week will take place in Antwerp. More info on the dates, topics and the theme will follow soon.



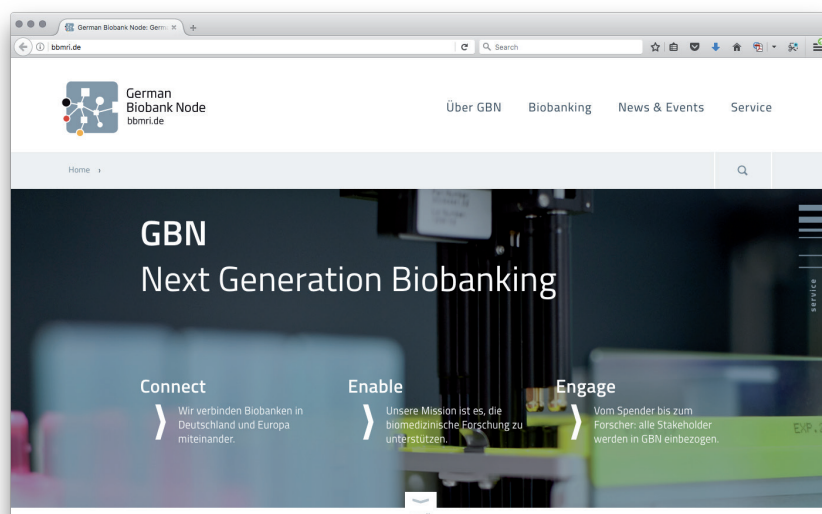
News

GBN launches new website

In October 2017, GBN has relaunched its website. The state-of-the-art responsive design and the content reflect the activities of the new funding phase and provide insights into the developments of the German Biobank Alliance work packages. Over the following months, the website will continue to grow as the biobank network evolves. An English version and information for biospecimen users will be added.

As a new service, an image database is available, which can be used by academic biobanks for their communications and public relations efforts. In the "Service" section of the website, products developed in GBN and GBA will be publicly available in the future.

In the coming weeks, we will transform the GBN Newsletter into



a digital e-mail newsletter. Thus news from our network will be sent in a targeted way and in shorter sequence.

Are you interested in receiving news from our newsletter service?

Subscribe here:

<http://bbmri.de/service/newsletter/>

GBN provides user satisfaction questionnaire

A working group of the German Biobank Alliance (GBA) has developed a questionnaire in order to measure the customer satisfaction of biobank users in a standardised way. The questionnaire will be sent to researchers using biobank services or samples after the project has been completed. The aim is to collect valuable feedback from the users in order to improve internal biobank processes and services. After the evaluation of the pilot test, the questionnaire will be implemented in the GBA biobanks starting in October 2017. In the future, the questionnaire will be available to all national biobanks. Evaluating the user satisfaction is a prerequisite for certification according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2015.

Questions? Contact us at germanbiobanknode@charite.de.

Events

6. Nationales Biobanken Symposium

6.-7. December 2017

Berlin, Mercure Hotel MOA Berlin

www.biobanken.de/de-de/symposium.aspx

Biospecimen Research Symposium: Quality Matters ISBER 2018 Symposium

27.-28. Februar 2018

Luxembourg

<https://isber.site-ym.com/page/CopyofLuxeGeneral>

The German Biobank Node (GBN) is the central contact and exchange point for the German biobank community – not only for researchers, but also for other stakeholder groups. Our aim is to facilitate exchanges of experience between national biobanks but also the participation in the European network of biobanks (BBMRI-ERIC). The development of standards for quality assurance as well as the elaboration of an IT concept for the sample and data exchange are our major projects.

Imprint

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