

We invite you to participate in GISTAR project for cancer prevention!

Significance of the topic

The wide expansion of gastric and colorectal cancer is a very serious problem around Eastern Europe, including Latvia, Russia and Belarus. Mortality from these diseases is high. Colorectal cancer (cancer of colon and rectum) and stomach cancer are the most wide-spread digestive cancers in the world. Many cases of the cancers are preventable; if diagnosed early, most of the tumours, including gastrointestinal cancers are treatable successfully.

European Commission recommends screening (early detection) to identify the following malignancies: mammography for breast cancer detection, smear for cervical cancer detection and faecal occult blood testing for the colorectal cancer detection. Each of these screening forms has proved itself as life-saving and cost-effective. Since January 2009, the screening programme for breast, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer has been introduced in Latvia. Early cancer detection programme is weak in Latvia, but, in Russia and Belarus cancer screening is not conducted at all.

Considering the significance of the gastric and colorectal cancer problem around Eastern Europe, as well as the fact that evidence for the effectiveness of colorectal cancer screening was obtained in 2011 within the scope of the project "Interdisciplinary Research Group for Early Cancer Detection and Cancer Prevention", funded by the European Social Fund, University of Latvia (LU) in collaboration with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Russian and Belarusian research centres are developing a new study of *H.pylori* eradication and pepsinogen testing for prevention of gastric cancer mortality (**GISTAR**), and is planning to engage 30,000 people aged 40-64, from Latvia, Russia and Belarus in the research.

Pilot study

The pilot study is planned before the major project, in 2013, around the border towns of Latvia and Belarus by involving 1 thousand Latvian and 2 thousands Belarusian citizens aged between 40 and 64. It is also possible that other centres will be involved in research. Regions participating in the pilot study will have an opportunity to take a further part in the main project **GISTAR** that will result in a significantly larger number of the screened residents around the regions.

Aim of the project

GISTAR study was developed to search for new screening methods to decrease mortality from gastric cancer in the high-risk areas. The objectives of the project are to find new methods of digestive cancer early detection, to confirm their effectiveness, thus finding opportunities to reduce mortality from these diseases.

Project implementation

A specially trained medical staff, guided by LU, will invite individuals aged 40-64, who have not previously suffered from any of malignant disease of the stomach to participate in the study. Those who expressed their willingness to participate in the study will be invited for the interview to determine their health status, to summarize life-style factors of the individuals as well as previous medical conditions and complains. Those individuals requiring immediate medical assistance will be recommended to undergo additional diagnostic testing or treatment. The rest of the group - selected individuals without medical complain - will be invited for further investigations. They will be offered to undergo blood and faecal tests. Patients having positive test results (i.e. in case of deviation from the norm) will be



Gastrointestinal cancer prevention study by predicting atrophic gastritis and colorectal lesions

invited for following diagnostic investigations (endoscopy). Sequential follow-up of the enrolled individuals is planned for the next 15 years. If necessary, patients will be asked out to extend medical supervision for a longer time.

What are the benefits for the involved residents?

- Evaluated health conditions and detection of risk factors that can require for a more thorough health examination.
- Most of the participants will be screened for stomach and colorectal malignancies early detection. In case of deviations from the norm, more in-depth investigations will be conducted.
- In case *H.pylori*, which may contribute to the cancer development, is discovered in the stomach, free medicine for the *H.pylori* eradication will be offered to the participants.
- Investigations will be carried out in a high quality.
- During the project, there will be an opportunity for the participants to get advices of qualified medicine professionals.

What are the benefits to the involved regions?

- Increase of public awareness level connected with health issues.
- Additional possibilities to provide high-quality health care to the citizens.
- Mortality decline, including mortality among the working population.
- Information on habits of the inhabitants, which affect population health in the region.
- Improvement of local medical staff qualifications.
- Promotion of cross-border cooperation.
- Future perspective-an ability to gain additional funding for the projects.

To be offered and funded from the centralised resources attracted by University of Latvia:

- Preparation of research; guidance and quality assurance of the study.
- Development of collaboration agreements.
- Training of local experts.
- Supply of the necessary materials for the project.
- Development of the unified reliable data tracking software.
- Transportation and storage of samples, centralized support for laboratories.
- Free medicines for residents' treatment (before examinations, for *Helicobacter* eradication).
- Experts' engagement in all project spheres.
- Participation in the preparation of follow-up projects to gain additional funding.

What is expected from the local authorities?

- Project co-ordination at the local level in collaboration with LU and local research centres.
- Educational support.
- Support for cross-border cooperation (including transportation of samples).
- If necessary, pay of accommodation for personnel involved in the research.
- Ensuring infrastructure for the project implementation on site (premises, transport and communications).
- Compensation to the regional institutions for local medical manipulations not covered by the state (such as upper endoscopy costs).

Thus, it is expected that University of Latvia provides leading and coordination of the research project. However, implementation of the project on sites will be provided by partners from research centres.



Participants of the project GISTAR planning meeting in Riga on 22-23 March, 2012



If you are interested in participation in the Project, please do not hesitate to contact us:

University of Latvia, Faculty of Medicine,
Screening Diagnostic Laboratory
Post address: Ilukstes street 45, Riga, LV-1073, Latvia
E-mail: gistar@gistar.eu

More detailed information on project:

www.gistar.eu



University of Latvia is looking for the partners for implementation of the Project GISTAR in Latvia, Belarus and Russia!

GISTAR

Multicentric randomized study of H.pylori eradication and pepsinogen testing for prevention of gastric cancer mortality

Riga, 2012

International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) supports the project

International Agency for Research on Cancer

