Limited Competition RFA: International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Monographs Program

Ron Johnson, PhD
Program Director
Division of Cancer Biology
Background

• IARC- International Agency for Research on Cancer
• Monographs- critical scientific evaluations of carcinogenic hazards to humans
• NCI support since 1982 via an U01 award
• Evaluates chemicals, biological agents, occupational exposures and lifestyle factors
• Advisory Group
  • Prioritizes agents every 5 years
  • Criteria- extent of human exposure, suspicion of carcinogenicity, public health relevance and new studies
Monograph process

- Working Groups review literature comprehensively
  - Subject matter experts - interdisciplinary, international
  - Evaluate epidemiology, animal studies and mechanism data
  - Summarize exposure data
- Determination of agent as a cancer hazard
  - Known, probable, or possible carcinogen, not classifiable
- Three Working Groups per year (NCI funds two)
- Volumes freely available as PDFs
- Over 1,000 agents evaluated by 125 Working Groups
Agents

- Recently evaluated
  - High concern - engine exhaust, red meat and outdoor air pollution
  - Low and middle income countries (LMIC) - malaria, hepatitis B and C viruses, indoor combustion/cooking
- New and high priority for 2020-2024
  - Bisphenol A, cytomegalovirus, e-cigarettes and nicotine, disinfection byproducts and cannabis smoking
Portfolio analysis

• Unique NIH award
• US carcinogen identification programs
  • Report on Carcinogens (NTP, NIEHS)
  • Integrated Risk Information System (EPA)
• Program distinctions
  • Broader number and type of agents evaluated
  • Agents of global concern, especially for LMICs
  • Frequently the first to evaluate an agent
  • Interactions with EPA, NIH (NCI, NIEHS) and CDC
Funding opportunity announcement

• RFA
  • Reissuance- enable submission of a renewal application
  • Limited competition- uniquely positioned institution
  • Review by NCI special emphasis panel

• R01
  • Reflects current NCI role of award stewardship
Requested set aside funds

- $900,878 TC/year for 5 years
- $4,504,390 total
- Based on current award

Allocation

- Convening Working Groups 30%
- IARC personnel 70%
Evaluation

• Internal
  • 48 publications from last 10 years analyzed by relative citation ratio (RCR, iCite)
  • 3.59 median RCR (near 90th percentile rank)

• External
  • Review of current project period by 5 outside experts
  • Many strengths with suggestions to improve the dissemination of information
  • Unique and critical role in cancer hazard assessment