

The WHO Classification of Tumours series: future and challenges

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Brief personal record

1980–1989	Research Associate, National Cancer Center Research Institute, Tokyo, Japan
1990–1992	Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Neuropathology, University of Zurich, Switzerland
1992–1995	Special Expert of Pathology, Laboratory of Experimental Carcinogenesis, National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, USA
Since 1995	Head, Section of Molecular Pathology, IARC, WHO, Lyon, France
Since 2006	Series Editor, WHO Classification of Tumours, 4 th edition

Abstract

The WHO Classification of Tumours project serves the important purpose of establishing uniform nomenclature and diagnostic criteria for human cancers that are accepted and used worldwide. A standardized classification is an essential foundation for the work of pathologists, clinical oncologists, cancer registries and cancer researchers. It forms the basis for the collection of histologically and genetically stratified population-based incidence rates and is a prerequisite for comparisons among cancer therapy trials conducted in different centres and countries. Since IARC took responsibility for publication of the series' 3rd edition, an understanding of molecular basis of tumours has become increasingly important for identifying new disease entities and establishing tumour classifications. The 4th edition, which is currently underway, is expected to be completed in 2018. Given the very rapid progress in genomics and the overwhelming amounts of genetic data produced by next-generation sequencing, we are living in a very exciting time, but this also presents new challenges for the WHO Classification of Tumours series. In my presentation, I will summarize the content of the previous and current editions, and will discuss the future of classification of human tumours, based on my experience as a Series Editor of the 4th edition and a Volume Editor of the WHO Classification of Tumours of the Central Nervous System.