

2019 Revised Preamble to the *IARC Monographs*: Summary statement

In January 2019, the Director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) considered the recommendations of a [2018 Advisory Group to Recommend an Update to the Preamble](#), and, accordingly, a revised Preamble was implemented for immediate use in the [Monographs programme](#). This is a critical milestone for IARC, because the Preamble establishes the rigorous criteria and procedures for the scientific review and evaluation of carcinogenic hazards by independent experts, free from vested interests.

In broad scope, the major recommendations of the Advisory Group will enable IARC to take advantage of scientific and procedural advances that have occurred during the 12 years since the Preamble was last amended. In particular, the Advisory Group recommended increased emphasis on mechanistic evidence, critical evaluation of epidemiological studies including of the exposure assessment methods, and strengthening of the systematic review methodology. These developments, in turn, were taken forward in recommendations to clarify and strengthen the process for reaching overall evaluations that are based on the three streams of evidence (from studies of cancer in humans, studies of cancer in experimental animals, and mechanistic studies and data). This revision to the Preamble allowed IARC to formalize, as well as advance, some important developments already being pioneered within the *Monographs* programme.

The Advisory Group to Recommend an Update to the Preamble comprised 21 Advisory Group members from 10 countries, with wide expertise including systematic review and philosophy of science, exposure characterization, epidemiology, carcinogen mechanisms, and risk assessment. Other participants in the November 2018 meeting included 7 Representatives of national and international health agencies, 3 Observers from interested organizations, and 16 members of the IARC/WHO Secretariat. The Advisory Group carefully considered [written comments from the public](#), [scientific webinar presentations](#), and input from all meeting participants.

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