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Dear Professor Gouveia,

Thank you for your recent letter articulating the importance of the *IARC Monographs* programme and making suggestions about topics for future evaluation. We agree wholeheartedly that cancer hazard identification has served a valuable public health function over the 53-year history of our programme. The *IARC Monographs* programme has evaluated the carcinogenicity of many pesticides over the years, including most recently DDT, lindane and 2,4-D in 2015 as part of volume 113 (<https://publications.iarc.fr/Book-And-Report-Series/Iarc-Monographs-On-The-Identification-Of-Carcinogenic-Hazards-To-Humans/DDT-Lindane-And-2-4-D-2016>).

At IARC, the priority of agents for evaluation is recommended by an Advisory Group of independent experts, who meet every five years. Prioritization is guided by the availability of evidence from epidemiological studies of cancer, animal cancer bioassays, and mechanistic studies in humans, animals, and in vitro systems. IARC has published its list of agents recommended for priority during the 2025-2029 programming period (Berrington de González et al. 2024 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(24\)00208-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(24)00208-0)). This list includes 19 pesticides with high priority for evaluation, compared with 3 pesticides (or pesticide groups) recommended with high priority by the previous Advisory Group (Marques et al., 2019 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045\(19\)30246-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1470-2045(19)30246-3)).

Recognizing that IARC's cancer hazard identifications are the initial phase in risk assessment, an interim Standard Operating Procedure was developed in 2018 to guide communication and collaboration between complementary programmes of WHO ([https://events.iarc.who.int/event/46/attachments/110/483/GC60\\_13\\_CoordinationWHO.pdf](https://events.iarc.who.int/event/46/attachments/110/483/GC60_13_CoordinationWHO.pdf)). In particular, before announcing a meeting to evaluate the carcinogenicity of a pesticide, IARC consults with the WHO secretariat of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) programme. The goal of this consultation is to coordinate efforts and plan respective activities to maximize process efficiency.

We note that, in terms of public health, the two types of assessments conducted by the *IARC Monographs* and JMPR are complementary in the sense that pesticides can have the same or different adverse health effects depending on the type of exposure, and they can also result in distinct risk characterizations.

For example, the JMPR risk assessment may suggest that residues in food are not a concern for consumers, yet exposure to agricultural workers or bystanders during pesticide application may result in occupationally or environmentally induced cancers.

IARC is now engaged in consultation with the JMPR programme to discuss complementary cancer hazard identification and dietary assessments for the high-priority pesticides on the list of recommended priorities for the *Monographs* during 2025-2029.

In this way, IARC and WHO intend to make the best use of our resources while assuring the most comprehensive examination of potential health effects associated with all of the exposure circumstances for the agents under consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elisabete Weiderpass', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elisabete Weiderpass, MD, MSc, PhD,  
Director