



INTRODUCTION

The Italian cancer registry network has grown steadily, thanks in part to the cooperation with the Center for Disease Control of the Ministry of Health and Alleanza contro il cancro, and it has developed even in areas where for years it had lagged behind.

The increasing number of people - particularly young people - involved in cancer registration, and the fact that the traditional figure of the registrar with a biomedical background is now required to work side by side with professionals who specialize in statistics and IT, call for new needs in staff training.

In particular, the introduction of automation and computer management in many stages of tumor registry data construction and production of results implies a growing interdisciplinarity, requiring competence and teamwork skills enabling people with different professional backgrounds to work jointly.

The AIRTUM handbook is therefore first of all a work tool provided to the cancer registries to enhance the technical and scientific quality of our product. Above all, however, it seeks to take into account the above-mentioned developments and to favor the evolution of cancer registries toward an ever more integrated use of professional skills, as well as of the computerized system that is at the basis of database creation.

Just as AIRTUM has supported the cancer registry development project, this handbook is likewise meant to favor the development of cancer registries, improving standardization of procedures. The establishment of a national database has made cultural comparison between registries possible, and has stimulated a homogenous quality check. The tools provided with this handbook, including the software programs for quality evaluation of the data produced, are important elements of this effort.

This handbook must be regarded as a work in progress. We are currently revamping the AIRTUM website (www.registritumori.it) for improved communication. This handbook will also be available online and it will provide a basis for updates, supplements, and, of course, further research studies by the AIRTUM workgroups.

The Committee wishes to thank all the professionals who so skillfully contributed to provide registrars with this important tool, which will be instrumental in improving the quality of our work.

The AIRTUM Steering Committee
