

## THE CONTICANET CONSORTIUM

A team from Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University coordinates the CONTICANET network, chairs the scientific advisory board, and leads several initiatives, including the epidemiology, molecular epidemiology and medical practice evaluation joint research activities and the interaction with the advocacy groups for adults and children. CONTICANET's overall project coordinator **Jean-Yves Blay** is professor of medicine at the Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University as well as chairman of the Soft Tissue and Bone Sarcoma Group of EORTC and an active member of the European Society of Medical Oncology. He has published over 210 peer-reviewed articles. Amongst other activities, the Claude Bernard Lyon University team also has research underway to identify mechanisms of action of imatinib and other TKI on GIST cells, cellular models of GIST, and aggressive fibromatosis and selected sarcoma subtypes, and to develop clinical research of innovative targeted agents in phase I and II trials in sarcomas and other tumour types.



*Pr. Jean-Yves Blay*

Other partner contributions include Irish partner the Cork Cancer Research Centre, leading the harmonisation of standard operating procedures at the consortium level and also participating in joint research on functional genomics, signal transduction, and drug screening.

Netherlands-based Erasmus University Medical Centre, a referral centre for its region, leads a specific task on non-clinical pharmacology and also seeks to establish and further existing collaborations on pharmacology and pharmacodynamics with other participants.

The Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Saint-Louis, the major referral centre of the Paris University hospitals for solid tumours and malignant haematology disorders, leads the network sustainability and work on integration activity, pharmacovigilance, pharmacogenomics and improving awareness of Competent Authorities and Health Authorities.

Milan-based Istituto Nazionale per lo Studio e la Cura dei Tumori contributes to many of the CONTICANET integrating activities, as well as joint research on target identification and

validation, study of drug-target interaction, and early clinical pharmacology and explanatory clinical trials.

PharmaMar, the leading biopharmaceutical company advancing cancer treatment via the development of new marine-derived medicines, leads a work package devoted to finding relevant targets for pharmacologic intervention in sarcomas, as well as investigating novel molecules and their early development as drug candidates for the treatment of connective tissue tumours and other malignancies.

Sanofi-Aventis, the largest European pharmaceutical corporation – and the third largest globally – has a special scope of oncology treatment products. As a CONTICANET partner, they lead activities in intellectual property rights, and as an industrial partner make available candidates from their portfolio. Teams from the company's oncology discovery, clinical development, and genomic science departments are involved in collaborative research projects within CONTICANET.

The Catholic University of Leuven leads the molecular characterisation of connective tissue tumours, participates in joint research on the development of new diagnostic tools, drug screening and clinical pharmacology, and contributes to the standardisation of diagnostic procedures and patient management on the consortium- and European-levels.

Institut Gustave Roussy, the largest comprehensive cancer centre in France, contributes to the network by participating in the establishment of a joint coordinated research programme, as well as novel locoregional therapeutic approaches and translational research on rare subtypes. This partner also contributes to standard operating procedure harmonisation, epidemiology studies methodology and biostatistics, long-term paediatric consequences, scientific meetings and publications, and improving therapeutic option availability.

The multidisciplinary group on soft tissue sarcomas from Italy's University of Padova's department of oncological and surgical sciences is involved in all the CONTICANET activities, in particular one on epidemiology and two projects within the seventh work package; one of which aims to "improve the therapeutic index of TNF-based isolated limb perfusion in patients candidated to amputation for sarcoma", while the other is setting up an on-line radiological images database for teaching and research purposes.

Ipsogen, an emerging biotechnology company based in Marseilles, employs advanced technologies to analyse gene expression and improve the disease management of cancers. The company contributes to network methodologies and infrastructures, particularly the work task targeting electronic networking by setting up an "initial secured collaborative web-based platform to support information exchange and collaborative work between the participants".

ARTTIC, a consultancy and service company dedicated to the setting-up and management of large international collaborative R&D projects, is in charge of management and administration support for CONTICANET, providing methods and tools, helping all partners fulfil their contractual obligations, and providing advice on EC related or consortium issues.

Lyon Ingénierie Projet, a subsidiary of the Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University oversees the allocation of grants between the CONTICANET partners, monitoring the general budget of all partners in close cooperation with the project coordinator. It also is the webmaster for CONTICANET.

Institut Bergonié is the comprehensive cancer centre for the southwest region of France. Its role in the project involves establishing a database of patients with connective tissue cancer and a virtual tumour bank, evaluating medical practices in sarcomas; collecting data on the epidemiology of sarcomas, GIST and desmoid tumours; molecular epidemiology and also participating in the molecular biology work package.

The University Hospital of Mannheim has a dedicated sarcoma committee (SarcomaCenter) managing clinical and translational research programs. The main research interest is towards angiosarcoma, radiation-induced sarcoma, rhabdomyosarcoma, desmoid tumours and gastrointestinal stromal tumours (GIST) with each of the tumour entities being specifically addressed by translational and basic research. The main contribution to the network is the coordination of a work package dealing with loco-regional treatment. “Standards of surgical resection and report on surgical margins, optimising and predicting the efficacy of isolated limb perfusion, and determining the toxicity of irradiation to connective tissues” are the main research interests within this work package. This partner also cooperates within the molecular characterisation of tumours and the tumour bank project. Finally, they are a task leader in the harmonisation of legislative problems and ethical constraints for the different working packages and are also strongly involved in the integration of patient advocacy groups in the eighth work package.

The Institute of Cancer Research, (London) manages the research programs of clinical research and translational research linked with clinical trials in both adult and paediatric patients. This centre is also involved in the implementation of the communication tools within the Network and externally.

Other contributing CONTICANET partners include the Laboratory for Biotechnology & Applied Pharmacology, (Cachan, France), the Institute of Oncology (Ljubljana, Slovenia) and the Institut Curie, (Paris), whose involvement is concentrated on the scientific and social issues of adolescent and young adults with rare tumours, and the genomic characterisation of soft tissue tumours