

# ECHO

Spotlight on research

## Give it a break!

**Cancer & Solidarity is ten years old. Ten years of research support. Result achieved: twenty-seven grants awarded, ten countries represented, CHF 280,000 francs distributed**

As Presidents of Cancer & Solidarity, we are happy to celebrate this anniversary. We see it as not just symbolic, but right in line with the objective that we set ourselves when the Foundation was created: that is, **to last**.

Today, after a decade, each day brings us new proof that research has an increasing need for unconditional support. Technological progress and recent discoveries in the fields of analysis and new treatment applications are highly encouraging. But this destructive disease also advances at a formidable pace. We hope that our Foundation's work will continue well into the future and that many young researchers will benefit from your generosity. For our goal remains unchanged. We take the opportunity of this latest issue of Echo to express again our commitment to research against cancer and to thank all the donors who support our projects and help the researchers continue their work. And please remember, our commitment depends upon yours.

Thierry F. Ador and Olivier Ador

## What's up, doc?

Thanks to over ten years of painstaking work by Professor Saurat, one of Europe's pioneers in dermatoscopy, the dermatology clinic at the University Hospital of Geneva has been chosen to receive an ultramodern device: **the Dermogenius**. This prototype machine, which was created by the Germany company, Rodenstock, and finalised together with the Geneva hospital, associates digital imaging with the computer. The process consists of applying a luminous microscope to a

beauty spot, where its polarising light penetrates the skin. All lesions and dissymmetry that indicate malignant melanomas are thus immediately located and identified. The method is far superior to the classic examination, with a certainty rate of approximately 90%. It not only speeds up diagnosis, but avoids the unnecessary removal of healthy beauty spots. In addition, the data recorded in the computer helps the dermatologist to track the evolution of a suspect beauty spot.

**N.B.: Each year, 1,200 new cases of malignant melanomas are diagnosed in Switzerland.**

Source: Tribune de Genève, september 2000

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## Living proof

**Psycho-oncology**, a new listening technique, has met with considerable success in hospitals in recent years. Its role is to reply to the distress and feelings of guilt that assail patients and their families. Today, most cancer specialists acknowledge the technique's usefulness. According to Professor Baillet, at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital, in Paris: *"Its purpose is to help us, as doctors, to listen more effectively to our patients and thus to be more open to their problems. It also helps the hospital teams caring for patients to work together better and be more supportive to each other, particularly in the difficult moments. Cancer is still an illness that people find hard to discuss. The superstitions and clichés are very persistent. A psychological approach supported by sound medical knowledge will make it easier to communicate at every stage of the illness, and also during remission or relapse".*

Source : Santé Magazine n° 298

**Researchers solve medical problems, we solve their money problems**

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## On the front line

This year, Cancer & Solidarity Foundation chose to support the research carried out by **Dr Isabelle Camby**. Dr Camby has been working for many years on different aspects of the oncogenesis of astrocytic tumours, at **the Laboratory of Histopathology at the University of Brussels**. Her programme currently focuses on the role of gastrin derivatives and the evaluation of inhibitory or antagonistic peptides in modulating the growth of astrocytic tumours. The project is now in a pre-clinical phase that is important to the knowledge of therapeutic needs, and more specifically, to the development of treatments for such tumours. It is also of great interest for the biological platform on which the current research is based.

## Planet research.

- After radiography, ultrasound, scanners and IRM, a new examination, called the **PET-scan**, marks a major step forward for research. This medical imaging examination, already used in neurology and cardiography, **enables earlier diagnosis and better monitoring of relapses**. The PET-scan has proved effective for bronchial cancers and some kinds of abdominal tumour.

Source : Santé Magazine n° 296

- About ten French centres offer a new technique for diagnosing breast tumours: **the Mammotome®**. The principle consists of applying an ultrasound, which enables part or all of the micro-calcifications to be aspirated for analysis. **The method avoids systematic recourse to surgery**, and therefore represents a significant advance, particularly in non-malignant cases.

Source : Vies Journées parisiennes d'échographie gynéco-obstétricale

## Vital statistics

Whilst the symptoms and treatments differ, **cancers of the colon and rectum** have a number of factors in common, particular risk factors. Together they represent the most frequently occurring cancer in the overall population. **In France, 33,000 new cases are diagnosed every year, with 18,000 in men and 15,000 in women. 5% to 8%** of colorectal cancers have family origins. They correspond to very precise circumstances: familial Rectocolic Polyposis represents **1%** of total CCRs when several members of the family have developed hundreds of polyps from puberty onwards. These forms are linked to the mutation of a gene (the ASP gene) that is isolated and can be identified in suspected cases. Its presence often justifies a total preventive colectomy. Hereditary colorectal cancer without polyposis represents **5%** of total CCRs.

Source : Ligue Nationale Contre le Cancer

- **A new medicine, human recombinant TSH, will improve quality of life for people who have had thyroid cancer.** Until now, deactivating the gland produced many unpleasant side effects. The new medicine enables the necessary progress checks to be made without these secondary effects.

Source : Top Santé n° 123

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