

ECHO

Spotlight on research

Give it a break!

«As presidents of the Cancer & Solidarity Foundation, we are happy to note that our association's vocation and financing system are inspiring others. Since its creation eight years ago, our Foundation has remained true to its objective: furthering research into cancer by supporting researchers under forty years old. The funds received by the Foundation are used entirely to finance research: either through direct donations, or as capitalized donation whose income is used for scholarship. Operating expenses are covered by contributions totally separate from the donations. With the same desire for transparency in the interests of progress, Arc (Association de recherche contre le cancer) is currently reorganising its own activities. After the crisis experienced in 1996, Arc has regained donators' confidence and broken the rule whereby subsidies go time and again to a closed circle of researchers. From now on, Arc is focusing on innovative projects that privilege young researchers. In addition, it subsidises emerging research projects, led by new teams, on specific themes related to cancer.» (Source: *Le Figaro* December 12th 1998)

Thierry Ador, President

Living proof

Six-year-old Laura has been undergoing treatment for leukemia for the past four years and a half.

«My illness is like tiny little creatures that are microbes living inside me. You had better ask mummy, she explained it to me, but I don't understand very well. The problem with it is that I can't see other children or go outside to play, because I might catch flu or something. And I can never finish school. I do like being at home and I have to like the hospital, because I'm always there. I haven't got the choice.

I can't really tell when it gets bad. It's the hospital that calls and says «you've had a relapse...»

Source: TV5, October 1998

Researchers solve
medical problems,
we solve their money
problems

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What's up, doc?

Last year, twelve researchers from five European institutes including INSERM and the European Institute of Oncology in Milan, published the findings of their work on a cross-section of **sun creams**.

According to their study, these products offer no protection at all against skin cancer: worse, they could encourage

beauty spots, which can, as is known, become cancerous. The European study followed 631 children between the ages of six and seven, located in northern and southern regions, the criteria being the appearance of beauty spots. Conclusions are astounding: the more cream use on the child, the greater the number of beauty spots. «The use of

sun creams would appear to be implicated in the development of melanoma» conclude the researchers.

Source: *L'Hebdo*, August 98

 **Cancer & Solidarité**
Fondation

Cancer & Solidarity Foundation,
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On the front line

At the Geneva cantonal university hospital, *Dr Thomas Matthes*, awarded a scholarship in 1998 from the Cancer & Solidarity Foundation, has conducted research into the detection of molecular changes involved in the pathogenesis of multiple myeloma (MM). His research developed in two phases. Firstly, he studied the manifestation of different factors of transcription and activation in the B lymphocytes and their malignant counterparts, taken from the blood of patients suffering from MM. In the second phase, by means of further antigenic stimulation, he was able to note that undifferentiated cells can undergo neoplastic transformation leading to MM. The goal of his research was to identify the transcription and differentiation factors that favour the genesis of MM.

Vital statistics

In Israel, a study involving more than 7000 cancer patients showed that 200 of them **live together as couples**, with a strong tendency for the two partners to suffer from the **same type of cancer**.

In the case of brain tumours, this tendency is **ten times as high** as the figures provided by statistics. It is seven times as high for cancer of the colon, and three times as high for stomach cancer or the combination of breast or prostate cancer. The authors of the study suppose that this tendency to mimic one's partner is due to the influence on **risk factors of identical environment and matching life style**.

Source: *Optima*, June 98

Planet research.

- Numerous scientific studies have aimed at determining whether what we eat can favour or prevent serious illnesses such as cancer. Results of studies in the US, Africa, Asia and Europe now enable us to distinguish some of the **good** foods (tomatoes, soya, grains, olive oil) and some of the **bad** (smoked food, alcohol, fatty foods); in other words, those that protect us from cancer and those that place us at risk.

Source: *Top Santé*, November 1998

- A new technique for diagnosing **breast cancer**, based on same concept as the electrocardiogram is now being tested in France: **the electromammogram**.

Source: *Sciences et Avenir*

- In the US for the last eight years, results obtained with **interstitial radiotherapy** have proved as satisfactory as those of surgery and radiotherapy in the treatment of **prostate cancer**. The technique consists of implanting tiny grains of radioactive iodine in the prostate.

Source: *Science & Vie*, N° 974

- An epidemiological study involving **35,000 women** after the menopause showed that the proportion of cancers of the digestive and urinary tracts was lower in those **who drank tea** (due to the presence of antioxidants in the tea).

Source: *Santé Magazine*, novembre 98

- On Internet, close to 700,000 sites are devoted to cancer. Visit our site: <http://www.cancer-solidarity.ch>.

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