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## 123 QUESTIONS TO...



**Charles Honoré,**  
head of sarcoma  
surgery at Gustave  
Roussy

### *What are the specific features of sarcoma surgery?*

These rare malignant tumours develop from connective and supportive tissues. Each year they affect more than 4,000 people in France. Their locations are extremely varied and there are more than 50 different sub-types. They can occur at any age, even in children. The sheer range of potential presentations means the disease is generally poorly understood and yet it requires highly specific treatment - particularly surgical - in which the expertise of practitioners is crucial.

### *Gustave Roussy is one of the three national coordinating centres for sarcomas. What does that mean?*

We treat more sarcoma patients than any other centre in France. We have a team of specialists, all experts in this field. For certain locations, we work closely with our partners at the Bicêtre University Hospital Centre and the Marie-Lannelongue medical and surgical centre in Plessis-Robinson. We also support our colleagues in a consulting role to ensure all patients, whoever they are, receive the best possible care.

### *What are the plans for the future with respect to your activity?*

Our surgical priorities lie in three broad areas: research, both clinical and fundamental, with several projects focusing on rare complex tumours; teaching, which, in the field of sarcomas, remains in its infancy in France; and patient care, with, in particular, the development of a day-hospital care option, as well as early rehabilitation and minimally-invasive robot-assisted surgery programmes for some selected indications. ■

In 2015, the Institute celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its chemotherapy teaching programme and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Doctoral School of Oncology – Paris-Sud University (ED418). Two symbols of its teaching excellence supporting the fight against cancer.

Alongside patient care and research, teaching represents an important mission at Gustave Roussy. The transmission of knowledge and expertise is a driving force behind progress in the field of oncology.

It is for this reason that, back in 1985, Professors Jean Lemerle and Maurice Tubiana set up the «anti-tumour chemotherapy and medical treatment of cancer» teaching programme. And all these years later «it remains the only French-language teaching programme run over 2 weeks that enables an international audience to review the most recent fundamental data relating to systemic cancer treatments», points out Prof. Jean-Charles Soria, head of the programme since 2007.

### **Professionals at the leading edge of knowledge**

The programme is delivered by leading specialists and researchers, from Gustave Roussy and other French centres. It is primarily aimed at doctors, biologists and research personnel with experience in the field of oncology, as well as medical residents, registrars, practising and student pharmacists, clinical research associates and project managers. 200 people go through the programme each year, and,

since its creation, nearly 3,000 people have benefited from the course.

Testimony to its quality is the fact that the French National Medical Council strongly advises doctors who have qualified outside France and wish to specialise in the field of oncology in France to attend the programme. And the programme has embraced new educational tools so that today it is available online in an interactive format.

### **Young researchers learning from the best**

The Doctoral School of Oncology, established by Professors Thomas Tursz and Christian Auclair in 2000, provides PhD students with their first experience of cancer research and a complementary training programme via Gustave Roussy's School of Cancer Sciences. They are thus able to carry out their thesis work within a dedicated environment supported by the best experts in the field. Based at Gustave Roussy and today led by Prof. Martin Schlumberger, the Doctoral School of Oncology is attached to Paris-Sud University – Faculty of Medicine, with the Cachan École normale supérieure as part of Paris-Saclay University. ■

## NEWS

## 30 YEARS OF TEACHING AT GUSTAVE ROUSSY





**Aurélien Marabelle,**  
Clinical Director of  
Gustave Roussy's  
Immunotherapy  
Programme

Aurélien Marabelle joined Gustave Roussy last October. At 39, this doctor, a graduate of the Ecole Normale Supérieure, is gearing himself up for an ambitious challenge.

«This programme, created by the General Director, Alexander Eggermont, is designed to make Gustave Roussy the leading European centre in the field of innovative immunotherapies», he explains. Combining translational and clinical research, his new functions fit squarely with a background that, from the outset, brought together scientific and medical studies. «At the end of my residency, I specialised in paediatric oncology, focusing on immunotherapy strategies in childhood cancers», he recounts.

Since then, his research, conducted at Stanford University in California, and at the Institute of Paediatric Haematology and Oncology in Lyon, has helped demonstrate the benefits of innovative immunotherapy treatments, which use therapeutic antibodies targeting immunity cells rather than tumour cells: a veritable paradigm shift in the field of oncology! Aurélien Marabelle explains further: «these treatments, which break immune tolerance to the tumour, have proved effective in a range of advanced-stage cancers».

The objectives of the Immunotherapy Programme are to implement these new therapeutic strategies in clinical practice and provide a support role alongside Gustave Roussy's different departments. ■

## Découvrir n°50 // march 2015

Monthly corporate newsletter of Gustave Roussy,  
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Photographs : Gustave Roussy ; Zabriskie Prod

Print : Reprography Gustave Roussy



Gustave Roussy created its Research Foundation in 2005. Its purpose: to fund research at the Institute, with a constant focus on «improving patient care and quality of life».

Created with the Val-de-Marne regional council and the support of the French Ministry of Research, the Fondation Gustave Roussy is a non-profit organisation authorised to receive donations and bequests.

Its Governance falls under the responsibility of the Supervisory Board, chaired by Jean-Pierre Davant, former chairman of the Mutualité française (French health insurers' body), which defines the strategic priorities, and an Executive Board, responsible for implementing decisions, chaired by Charles Guépratte, Deputy Director General of Gustave Roussy. The members of these two bodies include representatives from Gustave Roussy and members of civil society.

In 2010, the Foundation launched its first major appeal for donations, the «Revolution Cancer» campaign, with the objective

of raising €10 million in 3 years to support the Institute's personalised medicine programme. Contributions from 300 major donors, corporate sponsors and a multitude of individual donations enabled the campaign to raise more than €11 million by the end of 2014. The amount raised is testimony to the trust in Gustave Roussy and the genuine potential people see in personalised medicine as a legitimate tool in the fight against cancer. The money has been used, in particular, to fund the molecular medicine building and to recruit new dedicated research teams.

In 2015, the Foundation will launch its new fund-raising campaign, with a more ambitious objective: it wants to treble the sum raised in the last campaign, i.e. 50 million in 5 years! The research teams are already mobilised to demonstrate they deserve this support. ■

## GUSTAVE ROUSSY MOBILISED AGAINST BOWEL CANCER



For the third year running, Gustave Roussy mobilised for Mars bleu (Blue March), a month-long initiative to raise awareness of bowel cancer, the second most lethal cancer in France. In the last week of March, the Institute organised lectures, fun workshops and interactive games, focusing on the importance of screening. The impending arrival of the new «immunological» test will improve the early detection of cancers and pre-cancerous lesions. The other theme highlighted: nutrition, with a dedicated lecture and a cookery workshop run by chef Olivier Chapat.

Visitors had the opportunity to support research advances by taking part in two events «sponsored by Roche»: they could have their photo taken on a Harley Davidson or ride as many kilometres as possible on an exercise bike. ■



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