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123 QUESTIONS FOR...



Professor Michel Ducreux,
Medical Coordinator and Head of
the Department of Digestive Tract
Oncology

What is the up-to-date situation in treatment of colorectal cancer?

In France, March is devoted to the public health problem of colon cancer and, in particular, screening for it. This is a condition which we are succeeding in diagnosing earlier and earlier, but, unfortunately, we are not managing to cure every patient. Research in immunotherapy and recent advances in surgery are opening up promising prospects, but we still have a great deal of progress to make.

What treatment does the Institute offer?

When it is detected early, colorectal cancer is cured in 9 cases out of 10. The latest screening test is simpler and more effective. With 80% effectiveness compared with a previous value of 50%, it should enable us to detect more cancers. Colonoscopy then provides a reliable diagnosis. According to the severity and the degree of progression of the disease, each patient is prescribed a personalised treatment plan (surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, targeted drugs or a combination of these to maximise efficacy). At advanced stages, patients should receive specialised therapy. As an example, we can cite hyperthermic intraperitoneal chemotherapy. This was initiated at Gustave Roussy. It results in good cure rates and has been saving lives for 20 years.

Why are we appealing to the public for donations?

We are hoping that with the simplified screening method we really will manage to contain colon cancer. But only research can provide new agents and advances in treatment of these patients. Financing of this at a national level is inadequate. That is why we shall be appealing to the public's generosity throughout the year with the goal of instituting research programmes to yield ever more valuable results. ■



NEWS

COLORECTAL CANCER, VITAL PROGRESS

Gustave Roussy is using the opportunity presented by "Blue March", a month of activities related to colorectal cancer, to reaffirm its commitment to combatting this condition, which remains one of the commonest and most lethal of the cancers. Thanks, in particular, to better treatment, the mortality rate for colorectal cancer has fallen by 21 % over 20 years. It is, however, essential to continue to strive to make progress in screening and detection of the disease and to support ongoing research at Gustave Roussy.



Immunotherapy for colorectal cancer

Immunotherapy is currently one of the most promising research priorities in oncology. It employs various treatments to stimulate the immune system, so that the latter can attack malignant cells. After first being used with melanoma and lung cancer, this novel therapeutic method is beginning to be developed in gastrointestinal oncology.

Researchers at Gustave Roussy are currently conducting several studies to evaluate the role of immunotherapy in colorectal cancer (40,000 new cases of which are reported annually). One of these is a phase I study (MED1 4736), initiated late in 2013. This is assessing anti-PD-L1, durvalumab, a novel immunotherapeutic agent, in 500 patients with a variety of cancer types: colon, skin and lung.

«These agents seem to be very promising in some types of colon cancer and also in other gastrointestinal tract malignancies» says Dr Christophe Massard, Head of the Early Trials Committee at Gustave Roussy.

Local stimulation of the immune response to reduce tumour size is the objective of ISILI, the new trial which Gustave Roussy will be launching in the second half of this year. For patients with liver metastases, the main site of tumor relapse, interventional radiology will be employed to inject an immunotherapeutic agent directly into the metastases. This new procedure will facilitate the administration of a small dose without, however, risking loss of efficacy. It is expected that the results of this trial will show an improvement in response to treatment, increased amenability to surgery and better survival rates, at the same time as a reduction in side effects.

This international study is coordinated by Dr David Malka, Head of the Gastro-Digestive Committee. Professor Laurence Zitvogel and Drs Aurélien Marabelle and Judith Michels are responsible for a related research project incorporated within the main study, which aims to understand patients' immune profiles better, in order to decide which of them might benefit from this new treatment. ■



SPOTLIGHT ON...



VAL-DE-MARNE

La Ligue contre le cancer is an «association with public utility». It and its 103 Départemental committees fulfil a major role in communicating, informing and prevention, and financing research in oncology. It is also involved in support for patients and those close to them.

The Val-de-Marne Committee of the Ligue has had a long relationship with Gustave Roussy and regularly supports the Institute's work.

«Whether it is through financial support of research teams, by help in implementing arrangements to improve the quality of life for patients or by the presence of volunteer patient association representatives, we make a very varied contribution to Gustave Roussy.» points out Sophie Debiève, Director of the Val-de-Marne Committee of the Ligue.

«The Val-de-Marne Ligue is our primary partner in the Living Better with Cancer programme. They enabled us to start up in 2012 and to become the central provision within the Institute that we are today», emphasises Nathalie Renvoisé, Head of the Living Better with Cancer support programme. By sustaining communication facilities combined with those to improve wellbeing, the Ligue makes a widely-based contribution to Living Better with Cancer.

Another major contribution from the Ligue to the Institute was the establishment nearly 15 years ago of the Gustave Roussy Meeting and Information Area (ERI). It is also as a result of support from the Val-de-Marne Committee that the charitable association "Un Piano à l'hôpital" is able to mount regular concerts at the hospital and that complementary workshops to Living Better with Cancer (cosmetic care, gentle gymnastics, etc.) are organised on the Chevilly-Larue campus, in partnership with Onco 94 Ouest. ■

www.ligue-cancer.net/cd94

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Contact: lalettre@gustaveroussy.fr

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DECIPHERING



WORKING TOWARDS HAS CERTIFICATION

Certification by the Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS - National Health Authority) is an obligatory independent exercise in overall assessment of hospitals, with the aim of improving the quality of the health system.

Gustave Roussy is presently involved in its 4th assessment process, which will lead to certification after an HAS expert visit in June 2017.

The auto-assessment which Gustave Roussy is due to conduct during this period will focus on a number of themes linked to patient treatment in order to study the level of care offered and measures to improve quality and safety.

Everybody is involved

The visit by the HAS experts will not take place until June 2017, but preparation of the dossier requires that all staff, and also patients, start work from now.

The Institute will need to show that its management of quality and risks is adequately established and that

continuing development of this will enable it to control the risks and maintain, or even improve, current standards.

Auto-assessment consists of a description and analysis of the present organisation of the hospital and internal plans for improvements. The overall assessment will then be incorporated in the Gustave Roussy «Quality Account», which will be used by the HAS experts to prepare for the June 2017 visit.

After studying the Quality Account and investigating on site, the HAS will, in the second half of 2017, issue its decision on certification, which may or may not include recommendations or requirements for improvement. ■

CARTE BLANCHE FOR MARC JOLIVET AGAINST MELANOMA



For the 3rd year, the «Ensemble contre le mélanome» group has arranged an evening event at the Casino de Paris. On 5th April, Marc Jolivet has brought together performers and friends on stage with him: Alain Souchon, Louane, Gérard Lenorman, Charlélie Couture, Pierre Jolivet, Julie Ferrier, Christophe Barbier, Plantu, and Bernard Werber... Great figures from the world of music, theatre, cinema and comedy have combined their talents to combat melanoma.

The «Ensemble contre le mélanome» group aims to improve information on screening for skin cancer and to finance research on melanoma and quality of life for patients. All proceeds will be directed to Professor Caroline Robert's department at Gustave Roussy.

Support «Ensemble contre le mélanome»: www.ensemblecontremelanome.fr ■