

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

HCERES report on research unit:

Laboratory of Immunogenetics

LIMT

Under the supervision of
the following institutions
and research bodies:

Université Toulouse 3 - Paul Sabatier - UPS

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Research units

In the name of HCERES,¹

Didier HOUSSIN, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Frédéric MARTINON, chairman of the committee

Under the decree N°2014-1365 dated 14 november 2014,

¹ The president of HCERES "countersigns the evaluation reports set up by the experts committees and signed by their chairman." (Article 8, paragraph 5)

² The evaluation reports "are signed by the chairman of the expert committee". (Article 11, paragraph 2)

Evaluation report

This report is the result of the evaluation by the experts committee, the composition of which is specified below.

The assessments contained herein are the expression of an independent and collegial deliberation of the committee.

Unit name:	Laboratory of Immunogenetics
Unit acronym:	LIMT
Label requested:	EA
Present no.:	EA 3034
Name of Director (2014-2015):	Mr Antoine BLANCHER
Name of Project Leader (2016-2020):	Mr Antoine BLANCHER

Expert committee members

Chair: Mr Frédéric MARTINON, Service d'Immuno-Virologie, CEA, Fontenay-aux-Roses

Experts: Ms Myriam LABALETTE, Institut d'immunologie, Pôle de Biologie-Pathologie-Génétique, CHRU, Lille (representative of the CNU)
Mr Lutz WALTER, German Primate Center-Leibniz Institute for Primate Research, Göttingen, Germany

Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:

Mr Kamel BENLAGHA

Representatives of the unit's supervising institutions and bodies:

Mr Alexis VALENTIN, Université Toulouse 3

Mr Philippe VALET (Director of the Doctoral School ED N° 151 BHB)

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The research entity “Immunogénétique Moléculaire” is headed by the same unit Director since 1988. Initial research programs focused on the comparative analysis of antigens and blood group genes of humans and primates. In the late 90s, a new theme has been developed focusing on the polymorphism of the major histocompatibility complex of macaques.

The research entity was transferred in 2003 to the site of the Faculty of Medicine of Rangueil, where it is still located. A new relocation to the site of Purpan Hospital is planned for 2016.

The laboratory and the hospital laboratory are located on the same campus but they are separated geographically.

Management team

The research entity is composed of a single team of 4 teachers/researchers and 2 technicians. The research entity is managed by its director with the help of the researchers. The general policy of the laboratory is regularly discussed among researchers. Priority is always given to the areas of research funded by private or institutional contracts. Credit applications are managed collegially in response to invitations to tender. Priority is given to principal aims of the research team. For the next contract, the management will be in continuity with this strategy.

HCERES nomenclature

SVE1_LS6 Immunologie, microbiologie, virologie, parasitologie

SVE1_LS2 Génétique, génomique, bioinformatique

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	1	1
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	3	3
N3: Other permanent staff (without research duties)	2	2
N4: Other professors (Emeritus Professor, on-contract Professor, etc.)		
N5: Other researchers (Emeritus Research Director, Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)		1
N6: Other contractual staff (without research duties)		
TOTAL N1 to N6	6	7

Unit workforce	Number as at 30/06/2014	Number as at 01/01/2016
Doctoral students		
Theses defended	1	
Postdoctoral students having spent at least 12 months in the unit		
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) taken		
Qualified research supervisors (with an HDR) or similar positions	1	1

2 • Overall assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

The unit has developed a unique knowhow in immunogenetics of non-human primates. It is involved in a number of collaborative programs and it is supporting through these collaborations high quality research. The expertise of the unit and its recognition within the community has allowed its integration in several national and international networks. The unit renown in immunogenetics, which has been built in the field of macaque polymorphisms, leads to the development of ambitious new research theme on the immunogenetics of human immune system. This research area is of major interest for the scientific community from a basic research as well as a clinical point of view. Overall, the unit is producing innovative research of very good quality.

Strengths and opportunities in relation to the context

- The expertise of the research entity lies in the immunogenetics of non-human primates and it is nationally and internationally recognized for its expertise in the knowledge of major histocompatibility complex of cynomolgus macaques.
- The presence of clinical researchers in the research entity should have a strong impact on the development of the study on the exploration of inter-individual variability on the immune response in humans. It should favor the access to clinical samples and the constitution of patient cohorts.
- The research entity is involved in translational research with contacts with the industry.

Weaknesses and threats related to the context

- The research program on immunogenetics of macaques is mainly driven by the unit Director with low input of the other researchers, whereas it is highly competitive at the international level.
- The two main programs of the research entity are only loosely linked.
- The infrastructure of the research entity is physically separated leading to weak interactions.
- The implication of the three teacher/researchers in the development of the research programs is limited by the hospital responsibilities.

Recommendations

- The research laboratory and the hospital laboratory should be geographically closer in order to maintain the unit of this small size team.

- The workforce dedicated to the immunogenetics of macaques should be further strengthened with the recruitment of a PhD student and/or a postdoc fellow.
- The data collected for the study on the exploration of inter-individual variability on the immune response in humans will require integrated analysis which should not be underestimated.
- The research entity should strive to link both main programs by gradually implementing the same functional assays in macaque blood samples.