

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

report on research unit:

Myelin Maintenance and Peripheral Neuropathies

MMNP

under the supervision of
the following institutions
and research bodies:

Université de Limoges

Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Limoges

Evaluation Campaign 2016-2017 (Group C)

HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

In the name of HCERES,¹

Michel Cosnard, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Vincent Timmermann, 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 sole result of evaluation by the expert committee, the composition of which is specified below.

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

Unit name: Myelin Maintenance and Peripheral Neuropathies

Unit acronym: MMNP

Label requested: EA

Current number: 6309

Name of Director
(2016-2017): Mr Franck STURTZ

Name of Project Leader
(2018-2022): Mr Franck STURTZ

Expert committee members

Chair: Mr Vincent TIMMERMANN, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Experts:

- Mr Christian ANDRES, University of Tours (representative of the CNU)
- Mr Claude DESNUELLE, CHU Nice
- Mr Guy LENAERS, University of Angers
- Mr Nicolas MALMANCHE, Institut Pasteur Lille (representative of supporting personnel)

Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:
Ms Catherine HEURTEAUX

Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:

- Mr François-Jérôme AUBERT, CHU Limoges
- Mr Pierre-Marie PREUX, Université de Limoges

Head of Doctoral School:
Ms Véronique BLANQUET, ED n° 524, Doctoral School "BioSanté"

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The unit EA6309 entitled “Myelin Maintenance and Peripheral Neuropathies (MMNP)” is located at 4th and 6th floor of the Faculty of Medicine and of Pharmacy of the Limoges University. EA6309, which is directed by Mr Franck STURTZ since 2014, has been constituted around a mature medical pole within the CHU of Limoges.

Management team

The head of the unit is Mr Franck STURTZ.

HCERES nomenclature

Domaine principal: SVE4 Neurologie.

Domaines secondaires: SVE2 Biologie cellulaire, Imagerie, Biologie Moléculaire, Biochimie, Génomique, Biologie Systémique, Développement, Biologie Structurale ;

SVE5 Physiologie, Physiopathologie, Cardiologie, Pharmacologie, Endocrinologie, Cancer, Technologies Médicales.

Scientific domains

EA6309 works on the molecular and cellular mechanisms involved in myelination and genesis of peripheral neuropathies. EA6309 is a multidisciplinary team of clinicians (Neurologists, Geneticists, Histologists) and scientists (Cellular and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Molecular genetics). EA6309 activities are backed up by the “Centre de Référence des Neuropathies Périphériques Rares” and “le Service de Biologie et de Génétique Moléculaire”. The current research activities of EA6309 are related to peripheral nerves with the development of morphological and functional analyses of peripheral nerves in pathological conditions from patients with peripheral neuropathy and in corresponding animal models. EA6309 develops 2 axes of research: axis 1 is focused on the sensory and motor neuropathies and myelin maintenance; and axis 2 on small fiber neuropathies.

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number on 30/06/2016	Number on 01/01/2018
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	10	9
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	0	0
N3: Other permanent staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	7	7
N4: Other researchers (Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	1	
N5: Emeritus	1	
N6: Other contractual staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	1	
N7: PhD students	7	
TOTAL N1 to N7	27	
Qualified research supervisors (HDR) or similar positions	8	

Unit record	From 01/01/2011 to 30/06/2016
PhD theses defended	7
Postdoctoral scientists having spent at least 12 months in the unit	1
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) obtained during the period	1

2 • Assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

The EA6309 unit has a long-standing expertise in clinical, molecular and neuropathological diagnosis of Peripheral Neuropathies (PN). The goal is to improve the diagnosis of PN and precisely describe the molecular and cellular mechanisms leading to these diseases. The scientists develop new cellular models (e.g. based upon induced pluripotent stem cell technology and the use of co-cultures of innervated skin) and make use of disease models to identify new therapeutic targets. The research quality, output, academic reputation and appeal of the unit are good. There is proximity and strong collaborations with a recognized clinical expert center (Service de Neurologie, CHU de Limoges) conferring a multidisciplinary and translational approach, including setting up clinical trials. The unit is also embedded in a strong scientific environment at the GEIST institute (Génomique, Environnement, Immunité, Santé et Thérapeutiques). The unit has access to microscopy and sequencing platforms, which will re-enforce its regional and national value as a diagnostic center. The EA6309 unit obtained a significant contract with the French Army (DGA) related to skin tissue repair and innervations. However, interactions are not enough developed with the resources of the scientific environment but are mainly restricted to the clinical team of neurology, and the fields of expertise and of interest are no more in coordination. The training is good. However, research strategy and 5-year plan are fair, because based on the field of interest and expertise of individuals rather than on the goal to identify a common theme. The expert committee feels that intellectual and technical resources are present to build an interesting and competitive project, but not enough efforts have been undertaken to elaborate an optimal network of interactions benefiting each other. The expert committee made constructive recommendation for the next funding period, by creating a better merge between the two research axes. The expert committee noticed a very good management and life in the unit, and an efficient internal organization between the clinical and research part.