

Transcript of Binet Interview Part 1: Research Collaboration and iwCLL

Binet: [19]62 or 3.

Marti: 3.

Binet: 1, 2, or 3.

Marti: 3.

Binet: And I stay here. I stay here not two years, but one year, enough. Something like that. But at this time, I did not work on CLL. I work with electron microscope and I tried to see if we can prove that small lymphocyte make antibodies, you know? We tried to make—it was very, very, very... [Chuckles] very difficult work. We tried to find what about the ribosome on B lymphocyte in CLL and if there is some disturbance between normal B lymphocyte and abnormal lymphocyte for CLL.

Excuse me for my very poor English, but I try to speak.

Marti: We understand.

Binet: Ok. But when we come back to France, we see many patients, at this time. And I was very interested by CLL. Of course, I was very astonished because some patient receive drug, it was chlorambucil, some no. I don't understand why. And for Jean Bernard, who was the director of Hôpital Saint-Louis of the department of hematology, he think that everybody is to receive chlorambucil. But, so, we try to see the correlation between the clinical aspect and the future. And we initial time, with Claude Chastang, I worked with a very good statistician man but now he died. Correlation because the clinical aspect and the future of the disease. And at this time, we make our classification. It was just after Kanti Rai classification. So, I went—I met when I was in the Rockefeller, Gene Cronkite. And because Gene Cronkite, it is not an American man. It is a French man. [Laughs]

Marti: Really?

Binet: No. He love Paris. [Laughs] So, sometime I went in his lab. It was a very good team and also the team was horribly anxious. [Laughs] *Regarde*¹...it was funny.

And I work with Kanti.

Marti: Yes.

Binet: And we say, we have not exactly the same classification, it is ridiculous. *Ça le va le fait manque, le bien, et t'on plaques*². It is not a problem, you see?

¹ French translation: See

² French translation: It is fine, the lack [of consistency], it is fine, we will tackle it.

So, you have to work together. And first, I say yes and no. But I spend with them, I [unintelligible]³ at Brookhaven and we decide to make the first international workshop. It is not a workshop. We were 12, I think. We are very—we are few at this. And I have no *monnaie*.⁴ They say I have to organize. And we think we have to work in Paris. And in this first meeting, well, it is—there were Gene Cronkite. Uh, what is good English, hematologist, at this time. It was in England.

Marti: Galton.

Binet: Excuse me?

Marti: David Galton.

Binet: Yeah. No, David?

Marti: DAG Galton.

Binet: Galton.

Marti: D-A-G, Galton.

Binet: Yes, Galton was there. Uh...

Marti: Catovsky?

Binet: Of course. Catovsky. Uh, in Spain. It is Montserr—

Marti: Montserrat?

Binet: Not sure Montserrat, *n'est pas*?⁵ But Mont—the director of Montserrat was...

Marti: Rozman.

Binet: Rozman. And perhaps Emilio Montserrat too because it was a friend of him. But now see it is so. We are very few. And during three days, we mixed our result. And we try to make the simplification. It was the first job—but it is very informal job, you see? Write the paper, after. And we become friends. It was very important, because at this time, the problem if you're to treat, to give some drugs to the first stage. And in France, many people tried to treat these patients. It was crazy. But I was allowed to say, "please stop." It was the same with the spleen. When the s—it was only not allowed, but a spleen. In France, they will make a surgical operation to—

Marti: Remove the spleen. Splenectomy.

³ Transcriber's note: Unable to determine exactly what he is saying here, but he may be describing a visit to one of the reactors in operation at the time at Brookhaven National Laboratory's autoradiographic facility.

⁴ French translation: money

⁵ French translation: is it not

Binet: Yes. And I say, "it is crazy."

Marti: "Stop."

Binet: "Please stop." And it was very—it was a French problem. So, I went to all the French *départements* to say, "please stop," and to say, "you have to work together." [Shakes head.] One group means nothing. Now we have many people, will be interested by CLL, we have to work together. And it was very funny because all the large departments refuse. Saint-Louis refuse. And I fought with Saint-Louis. [Chuckles and mimes pounding on the table.] It was the same for Henri-Mondor, they refuse. And I worked only with small departments in France, in Paris, or in the other countries.

So, the story for us of CLL was this one. And after we have to prove that the drug means nothing in CLL. It was difficult, difficult because it was very difficult to convince a patient that I—I think we have not a very—no problem, we have to take nothing, but they say no. "Doctor, I have to take chlorambucil." Chlorambucil. Chlorambucil! [Laughs]

Marti: "I have to be treated."

Binet: So, it—we start with this. And after it become a routine, because after it was the problem of CHOP and of COP. And we have stopped some time because in one arm of the protocol, we have some problem with CHOP, to stop for the CHOP. And after we stopped again. And it, so, and for instance, for fludarabine, we are not the first. For fludarabine, the first to treat them was the group of Houston. It was the first to treat them.

Marti: Keating.

Binet: And what is the...

Marti: Michael Keating?

Binet: [Nods] Yeah, Michael Keating. And but I think it was not that first CLL congress. But after, it was at the second, very short time. He come advised to see me. There is no problem. And he helped me to obtain fludarabine. But he did not attend the first.

And at the same time, of course, Kanti had fludarabine, Houston group was fludarabine, and perhaps also, I don't know.

At this time, the German people was not at all interested by CLL. It is strange, because now they are very hard on CLL. But at this time, no.

And, Daniel Catovsky's protocol was very complicated. Ah! It is very clear in med, he knows everything, but the protocol [unintelligible]. [Shakes head]

So, it was difficult to work with him. It was too complicated for us, you see. If you like, I try to obtain the real—all the first papers. But I have to join

Guillaume Dighiero. And now, I try yesterday, I will try this week, and you have to give me your mail.

Marti: Sure. Yes, yes.

Binet: Yes, and I will send you. Because we publish very much at this time. Too much. For instance, irradiation...total body irradiation. We try, and it was terrific results. So, I publish the bad results, because somebody says, with all this irradiation, you can stop the disease, but you have many problems with the platelets. We stop. I publish four patient. I mean, four, four patients. Four patients died. But it was not in American journal, in...

Marti: A French journal?

Binet: Well, I publish in a very short time. Very short time. "Please, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, because it's very dangerous!"

I don't know if I have had something, I don't know.

Marti: Do you recall the year of the first meeting, of the working conclave?

Binet: No. [Laughs] But I promise you, I send you, because I worked very much for—I have no *monnaie*. I have no place, because in Pitié Salpêtrière, it was a place for the students, I think it's open. And we worked during the weekend. I have to organize a dinner for them, because in life, French food. [Laughs] But I don't remember. But I—because when I leave Pitié Salpêtrière, I don't know that there were always many people. They are there, but I don't know that they were. I tried to—when some—I think you called me Saturday, no?

Marti: Yes.

Binet: Some people from Marseille called me.

Marti: Yes.

Binet: And I have been in Pitié Salpêtrière some time but I don't find them. I can't say you exactly the first meeting and the other one because I have many papers and I have to write for everything. And I write myself.

Marti: I was able to find some documents on the fourth and fifth meeting.

Binet: Where, Gerald?

Marti: Oh, I didn't bring—oh, I knew I should have brought my laptop. The pictures—the fourth meeting was at the Institute of Pasteur—

Binet: Ah yes. It was organized by Guillaume Dighiero.

Marti: Yes.

Binet: Yes, I have to find it for you. Yes. It was at Institut Pasteur, and it was a— not in a—now, it is not a very nice place, but at this time, the room was wonderful. It is not a good meeting. I don't remember, but it was [unintelligible] which I don't remember, and the American people were the— because there are too many French people. Yes, you invited them, but the Americans were furious. They say, "What! What! There are too many people. You cannot work!" You see?

Marti: And the fifth one was in Barcelona. The fifth one—

Binet: Yes. You give to us to mail you.

Marti: Right. And there was actually a proceedings volume, a book from the fifth, which I have a copy of.

Binet: The first one.

Marti: But the first—the date of the first three, the first three meetings—

Binet: And we published the first. *Bon.*⁶ And fourth, the fourth was at Institut Pasteur?

Marti: Yes.

Binet: And the fifth was not in Paris.

Marti: It was in Barcelona.

Binet: Barcelona. But for the fifth, you have to ask Emilio.

Marti: Okay.

Binet: Because he—I'm sure, he's very well organized and I think he'll have all the papers. Emilio.

Marti: Is there a good summary of CLL electron micrograph morphology?

Binet: No.

Marti: No.

Binet: Because there is no difference, we cannot obtain any difference between— because for electron microscope you have to see the good—you have to seek the rare lymphocyte of CLL. And this time, I think it was because it was a time of rosette. It was too complicated to be sure that in the patient was it a normal lymphocyte or abnormal lymphocyte. So, no. You see, you try to publish but it is very difficult.

Marti: Difficult.

⁶ French translation: Good

Binet: We count the ribosomes, you see, we submit but we cannot obtain results.

Marti: Now, it seems that when you went to Rockefeller, the T and B cell classification of lymphocytes had not yet occurred.

Binet: No.

Marti: And that would come later.

Binet: Yeah. That is true, yes. No, at Rockefeller, I learned—I learned people. The director was Palade, a very clever man. And Palade, of course is involved with the problem of ribosome and so on. So, he told me, "I'm sure ribosome of CLL are abnormal but we cannot prove," because when we tried to isolate the ribosome there are not many. So, in the fraction, it is very difficult.

Marti: It's very hard.

Binet: And after we have to work with chemistry technique. It is difficult to see the difference between normal ribosome and ribosome of CLL. We are not successful.

Marti: Not succeeded in isolating it.

Binet: Isolating it, yes. And we tried to label with autoradiography to see. Because, at this time when ribosome [unintelligible] nobody was completely sure that lymphocytes secrete antibodies. The plasmacyte, plasmacyte it was sure—

Marti: Yes.

Binet: Because you have the plasma rough endoplasmic reticulum, but for lymphocyte it was not sure. It was Galton(?) who said, "I'm sure some lymphocytes secrete immunoglobulin." But it's all. And Seligmann tried to prove—Maxime Seligmann—but he died now. And after we prove that small lymphocyte was abnormal, I think it was the first—

Oh, Guillaume Dighiero, we work together. I don't know what is the first to prove, and there was a problem between that. And he said, yes, it was me and I say no it was me. But I will find the papers of this.

Marti: Ok, excellent.

Binet: The first one is lymphocyte is abnormal or not in CLL. It was not proven. It was difficult. It was difficult at this time because you had to first make rosette to be sure that the good lymphocyte, after we destroy the rosette we tried the lymphocyte. It was a difficult problem.

Marti: One thing that I wanted to ask you to review was how you went about the formation of the CLL French Group Cooperative. The French Cooperative.

Binet: I have to write my paper because at first I sent to all the *département*—hematologic departments in France.

Marti: France.

Binet: *Bon*.⁷ To make a lecture and say, "*Bon*," and it was not successful. [Laughs] Lyon refused to work with me. Lyon just very—Lyon, do you know this, it's a very important school of medicine. I try to work with Grenoble because Grenoble is another city part in France, and Daniel Hollard was the chief of the department, stayed some time in—has been at the Brookhaven, and he obtain the machine to make extracorporeal irradiation of blood. And I obtained this same machine in Paris, but at first it is another problem. Well, at first we cannot— though we make irradiation of ultraviolet, of CLL, of lymphocyte.

Marti: UV.

Binet: UV. *Bon*, it was a terrific job, terrific job. After we obtain the machine from Gene Cronkite—and *aussi*⁸ we publish. We publish not bad results, but the group of Cronkite was the first with Peter Stryckmans at this time. Now he's retired, but he came from Brussels and he stay three or four years at Brookhaven, and he was in charge of the program of treatment of patients, but he has not many treatments. And he proved it is very efficient for blood. I don't know—some time for one month—some time [gestures at neck] for lymph fluid exchange(?), and some time, but very few result for the lung because the separating is abnormal.

Marti: Sure, sure.

Binet: So, you see—

Marti: But not bone marrow. So, Lyon, Grenoble—

Binet: Ah no, everything. Lyon. Grenoble. Lille. Lille is in the city of—ah, I will bring you a map of France—

Marti: Okay.

⁷ French translation: Well

⁸ French translation: also