

Transcript of Binet Interview Part 2: History of French Hematological Treatment

Binet: *Alors*.<sup>1</sup> The city which worked with us, do you see the France, and Paris?

Marti: Yes.

Binet: Okay. In Paris there was—there were very few people worked with me in Paris. Saint-Louis, no. Henri Mondor, no. Go on, then. Lille. Lille is a city of the north of France. Lille. I will see where is Lille. Arras...it is between Arras and Brussels, but it is in France. [Unintelligible, speaks to himself.] Let me see. Where is...Lille. Lille. Lille.

Marti: Okay.

Binet: Where we are, we—

Marti: Northern France.

Binet: Yes. No, no, it is in France.

Marti: Okay.

Binet: Okay. Lille puts us—Lille, it's okay. Caen. Caen is a city in Bretagne. Caen, Évreux, Caen, where is this.

Marti: C-A-E-N.

Binet: Brest. Brest is here. Brest, you see Brest? Just at the end of the...Brest?

Marti: B-R-E-S-T.

Binet: B-R-E-S-T. Nantes, Nantes...here. Okay? Nantes.

Marti: I have it.

Binet: Strasbourg should be—Strasbourg is very important city in France. Lyon, no. Poitiers. Poitiers work with us. Poitiers. Sometime—I think it must be so. Poitiers. Excuse me. Poitiers, where is it? Poitiers. Here, you see?

Marti: No. Okay.

Binet: Dijon. Dijon. Côte-d'Or. Dijon, here. Marseilles, Nice. Bordeaux. [Unintelligible, speaks to himself.] Toulouse. Toulouse, Toulouse, Toulouse, Toulouse. [Unintelligible, speaks to himself.] Toulouse. Bordeaux—no, *La*, Toulouse. Toulouse is a city here.

Marti: Okay.

Binet: I think it's all, but I will find the papers, and of course, you have to give the names of all the participants.

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<sup>1</sup> French translation: So.

Marti: Yes.

Binet: —and you will see that the name—

Marti: Okay.

Binet: —because they were there also, and you have a meeting for our group in *préparant*.<sup>2</sup> One for each year we were meeting in Paris. No, no, in Paris. We were meeting to see where we are at new idea for new protocol, if we cannot turn some of the drugs and so on you see. But at that time the treatment was Chlorambucil, was COP, CHOP, prednisone. Prednisone. And we participate to the protocol with submission to *New England Journal of Medicine*,<sup>3</sup> but it was not a good paper of immunoglobulins, you see. They try to treat all the patients with intravenous immunoglobulins, and they said that it's not true, there is good result for CLL too. It was not true, they are good results for infection because you are normal—the number of infections diminish, *petit*,<sup>4</sup> so. Okay?

Marti: I think that's good. What—who would you say has taken up your work or who comes after you for CLL?

Binet: Now, the—exactly the same group, but the chief of the group was—is not was—is Véronique Leblond. I will write this name. Véronique Leblond. She published in New England, and she's now—now she is the director of the department of hematology at Pitié Salpêtrière. And Merle-Béral works for CLL in terms of flow [cytometry] in Pitié Salpêtrière too.

Marti: Okay, and another area that I wanted to mention was if you would talk a little bit about your relationship with Jean Bernard.

Binet: Oh, very good one. *Non petit especionnal personnalité*<sup>5</sup>—personality, because I was—perhaps I have a book on this— [Gets up to retrieve book.] No, no, no, stay, stay. I have this book for—I have a book on Jean Bernard, eh? No more, maybe. You understand French? Will give you—

Marti: Oh, wow. Ok. Thank you.

Binet: And I give you a book too for the Academy. In English, I have the book in English for the French Academy. The place where we are. This one is for you.

Marti: Oh, this is good. This is good.

Binet: Jean Bernard, you see was my teacher, so when I was young, I work like an *externe*, *externe* is a student. After I was resident, after I become *chef de*

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<sup>2</sup> French translation: preparing

<sup>3</sup> Dighiero G, Maloum K, Desablens B, et al. Chlorambucil in indolent chronic lymphocytic leukemia. *N Engl J Med*. 1998 May 21;338(21):1506-14.

<sup>4</sup> French translation: small

<sup>5</sup> French translation: Not a small personality

*clinique*. *Chef de clinique* in English means senior, and after I become *professeur attaché* with him in Saint-Louis. But in '68—in '68 there was a real revolution in France, and because before '68 in Paris there was only one school of medicine, one school of medicine of all the Paris, and they founded at this time 12—we go from 1 to 12. It was crazy, schools of medicine.

So, at this time I leave Jean Bernard and I went to Pitié Salpêtrière, and I created there a department of immunology in '69. Then after I got moved, I stay all the time. But I have always very good personal relation with Jean Bernard and because this—every time, because once he's retired, at first Jean Bernard was first at the resistance front, and everybody tried to work with Jean Bernard. But once he retired, nobody went to see him, and I was alone to see him, not very often, but once every two or three months. He lived in—near Jardin du Luxembourg, Rue d'Assas, and I have an appointment always Sunday morning at 12. So, we speak together during and he went in my department in Pitié Salpêtrière—how could I forget—every week. Every week, when he retired, he went in my department and he went to the seminar, he was always at the seminar. So, I was there—he was a very good friend of another hematologist, Marcel Bessis, a very good cytologist. And I was always very near to Jean Bernard and Marcel Bessis, and in—at the end of Jean Bernard's life it was bad because nobody liked to see him except myself, and a Belgian, who is Jean-Louis Michaux, who worked with us at this time, and Jean-Louis Michaux came very often from Brussels to see Jean Bernard.

Marti: Recently, just yesterday, in a rare bookstore, how do you say, *ancien*, ancient, antique. In a bookstore I saw a book, *The Illustrated History of Hematology* by Jean Bernard, Marcel—

Binet: And myself.

Marti: And yourself.

Binet: It is not a good book. [Laughs] And I write—every—we give some prepare, but it is not *en réal entité*,<sup>6</sup> you see?

Marti: Okay.

Binet: You have to work very much, for example—

Marti: Okay.

Binet: Bernard liked to write too quick—he said, no, no, no. It's finished, you have to publish in short time. It was crazy because in fact it is time with many things to say to see that in the story of hematology, you see, and do you

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<sup>6</sup> French translation: in real entity

know the poly—you are a hematologist, of course. *Bon*,<sup>7</sup> you know polycythemia?

Marti: Yes.

Binet: You know in France—I will see a picture indoors out front because in France, polycythemia was described by a physician who was called Vaquez. Vaquez was a specialist of heart, and he sees many thromboses, and he sees cyanosis while not explained by problem of heart and lungs.

And he published them. This is very interesting; sometimes you can see cyanosis. At this time, we count—but it was—he start to count the number of red cells, you see. He sees sometimes—you see cyanosis and no problem in lungs. And of course, a patient died, and he make autopsy and he said always the lung is normal, the heart is normal, but, enlargement of the spleen. And towards the end of the last century, you see, I don't know if he says that, because he cannot prove. So, bone marrow is very active. It was genius but he cannot prove.

Marti: True.

Binet: —that they're very active. And the spine, maybe the hematologist don't know from where comes the blood cells, and bone marrow was not sure. It was a good place, you see, and I say, I will show you on the first floor, a picture. We see Vaquez. And Vaquez was the first French, because in 1923—and you can see the reference in this book, I think, was founded the French Society of Hematology, and Vaquez was the first president. He was not really hematologist but he described primary PV [polycythemia vera], and in French we call it Vaquez disease. We don't say polycythemia. Very often we see—and he described, because he see cyanosis, enlargement of spleen, thrombosis, and heart and lungs are normal. It was the symptoms of the disease.

Marti: I was not aware that two platelet disorders were named after Bernard. Bernard-Soulier Syndrome?

Binet: Bernard-Soulier. It was a disease of platelets.

Marti: Yes.

Binet: Yes, yes, but I was not at all involved. It was before I become extern—but at this time Jean Bernard make everything, and it was a rare entity. But in France, Jean Bernard was a man who organized hematology. And he were very much—when he become chief of department, the director of hospital said to him, we are not to take in your service, children with leukemia, because they will die in two or three days. Jean Bernard was the first to say no. I have to take them in my department. You see, it was in '46, at this

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<sup>7</sup> French translation: Well

time nobody works on leukemia. And he make a very active protocol for acute leukemia. With Jacquillat, but Jacquillat died.

Marti: He also has a textbook of hematology or a textbook on leukemia?

Binet: Many, many, many, but very bad. [Laughter]

Binet: One during the war. During the war he was resistant, he was against the German people.<sup>8</sup> Though, he was in the country alone, and he was writing a book on hematology, two kinds of hematology disease. One we know exactly the origin, and many we know nothing of the origin. It was a very bad book, and after, they are not too good. After, we use your book.

Marti: Okay.

Binet: The American book.

Marti: The reason I ask is that sometimes in the history of CLL, at least in the US, they use Sir William Osler's textbook of medicine, which was some 9 or 10 editions, and—

Binet: Nine editions, yes.

Marti: —but there are like two pages—

Binet: On CLL.

Marti: —on CLL, and so I was trying to find the equivalent textbook of hematology.

Binet: Like this textbook of Jean Bernard?

Marti: Yes, that's what I'm thinking.

Binet: Is it? But it's not good text.

Marti: But it is a historical point in time.

Binet: Yeah, yeah. I don't know where you can find it. Perhaps you can go with me to the library and see of the French—

Marti: Here?

Binet: Yes, we go library.

Marti: That's an excellent idea. Yes.

Binet: We will go. Okay.

Marti: Very good, excellent.

Binet: Okay.

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<sup>8</sup> Jean Bernard was a member of the French Resistance during WWII.