

Transcript of Montserrat Interview Part 2: History of iwCLL

Montserrat: Now [Mogens Mørk] Hansen published his doctoral thesis—

Marti: 188, 189 cases?

Montserrat: Yeah, and I had the copy, but, I mean, it's misplaced probably, and I had this indicated, and that was the history of all the serial cases. It is something very similar to what David Galton did—

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: —as a matter of fact, and one of the first, one of the authors then was Christian Geisler, which is a selective.

Marti: Yes, yes, thank you.

Montserrat: Unfortunately, I don't have a copy—

Marti: Sure.

Montserrat: —and this is the only one I have—

Marti: Sure.

Montserrat: —but this is the abstracts, so, and this is the very first time in Barcelona in which we had the abstracts. So, this is the very, very first time in which we had a list of abstracts, as far as I remember. This is the only one I have from the summer. I mean, it's—

Marti: Well, maybe sometime I can arrange for some funding to have it copied.

Montserrat: Well, I can copy it for you. I can copy it for you, no, it's—

Marti: Because it would be, it's obviously, it's a very important document.

Montserrat: No. I can copy it for you. It's not a problem. I can, I will keep it aside. I will make a copy for you. So, this is what happened here, so, what, that was—I made a joke.

Marti: Okay.

Montserrat: But, I said that this wasn't really the days in which [unintelligible] the field of CLL, are you crazy or what?

Marti: Yeah.

Montserrat: And I like very much this photography, because, I mean, this is the complicity, I mean, these two guys—

Marti: You know—

Montserrat: —succeeding, not disputing, I mean, because of the different classifications.

Marti: I took a photograph of them once, and I could never get over how that history chapter that I wrote, and I put the picture in of Binet and Rai together, and he was so thrilled that the picture was together rather than separate.

Montserrat: Well, you have here—I mean, it's very small, but still...

Marti: Sure, sure.

Montserrat: Still, still, still, still, again, this is Rozman. Do you see right here, this is Lennert.

Marti: Yes, Karl Lennert. That was before he got—

Montserrat: Okay, this is Pangalis. You see, here is Federico Caligaris.

Marti: Yes, I, yeah.

Montserrat: You've got Michael Keating.

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: This is Bob. Estella Matutes here—

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: —along with, this is Barlogie—

Marti: Oh, Barlogie? Barlogie came to a CLL [conference]? Wow. That must have been beneath his dignity.

[Both chuckle]

Montserrat: Vis-à-vis. Robin Foa—

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: That's Tom Kipps.

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: This is the Mayo Clinic guy, Neil Kay.

Marti: Kay, Neil Kay?

Montserrat: Yeah, Neil Kay. So, Terry came here.

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: Which is sick, as you know.

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: So, I mean, it's—I was—

Marti: That photo, now that, since that's 1991, that's the number five.

Marti: Yes, and then it's the fifth International [Workshop on CLL].

Marti: Sitges? How do you pronounce that?

Montserrat: Sitges.

Marti: Sitges. Oh, Sitges. Okay.

Montserrat: Sitges. And, well, this is the—

Marti: 2009. Okay. Okay.

Montserrat: That's the...yeah.

Marti: And this is Hallek.

Montserrat: This is Hallek. Peter. Peter Hillmen—

Marti: Oh, that's Hillmen, yes.

Montserrat: And Döhner.

Marti: Oh, yeah.

Montserrat: I would just strongly recommend you if you have not—

Marti: Yes.

Montserrat: —Danny, I mean, to talk to Daniel Catovsky.

Marti: Oh, I have every intention. I mean, Daniel has been just an incredible—

Montserrat: Because of the founding members, I mean, it is very—it's interesting because of the founding members, the only founding members left, it's—

Marti: Rai.

Montserrat: Kanti, Daniel, and myself. And Guillaume. But Guillaume is all but retired, Danny is half-retired, I am half-retiring, and then Kanti, [chuckles] nobody knows.

Marti: Knows. [chuckles] Dighiero is in Brazil?

Montserrat: No, he was born and grew up in Montevideo.

Marti: Oh, Uruguay.

Montserrat: He had to escape Montevideo for political reasons, and then he moved to Paris, where we met Jacques-Louis Binet. And once he retired, he

went to, you know, back to his country or something, and he came back to Montevideo. He build up so-called Pasteur Institute in Montevideo.

Marti: Oh, that's right.

Montserrat: Yeah. But now I think that he is back in Paris—

Marti: Okay.

Montserrat: —because all his children and grandchildren, all the family, is based in Paris. Well, you know what happens when you leave your country. I mean, it's—so you belong to wherever your children and your grandchildren are. So, it's up to you. You have to let me know. I mean what is the kind of material that you can, you need, and send to me. I mean I will copy this for you.

Marti: Yes. I think that slide lecture, if that's okay—

Montserrat: Yeah, yeah, no problem.

Marti: And the critical thing about this is Alberto has a copy of that or something similar to it, and one of the things which I knew but relearned is it's important to identify all the people, you know actually, to have a, some kind of template—

Montserrat: Yeah, yeah.

Marti: —and maps, the person, because—

Montserrat: Yeah, for this photograph it should not be that difficult—

Marti: No, but I didn't know that Tom Kipps had a beard.

Montserrat: [Chuckles] Oh, Alberto's here. Alberto [Orfao] is here in the corner.

Marti: Yeah, yeah, yes, yes.

Montserrat: This is the guy from—this is the guy from Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>—

Marti: Oh, uh...

Montserrat: And this is the guy from Australia<sup>2</sup>. So, it should be real easy. This is the Russian that then he decided to move to the field of pediatrics. This is that, a guy from the Yugoslavia, Jaksic.

Marti: Jaksic, the TTM classification.

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<sup>1</sup> Alain Berrebi

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Mulligan

Montserrat: Yeah, and then this is his boss, Jaksic, and what was the name of Jaksic and—but move on with all these names, yeah?

Marti: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Montserrat: And this is, oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Still active, and, so, he was a very young person. Remember the guy that made—along with Bob Gale. Ken Foon.

Marti: Ken Foon.

Montserrat: —Ken Foon, Ken Foon, Kenneth Foon.

Marti: He recently published a paper on—

Montserrat: Yeah, well, a critique about—

Marti: Light.

Montserrat: A critique in *Blood* about the new—

Marti: RFC light.

Montserrat: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. This Ken Foon. This one, honestly, I don't remember, but, I mean, we will—

Marti: We'll figure it out.

Montserrat: And I think this is the famous B-cell biologist...Okay. So, it's—

Marti: Stevenson?

Montserrat: No, no, no, no. What is the...

Marti: Oh uh...it looks too old to be...Chiorazzi?

Montserrat: No.

Marti: No.

Montserrat: And here is Juliusson. Polliack. Aaron Polliack.

Marti: Yeah.

Montserrat: Eva Kimby is there as well. And then there are many of my associates. And, so, I think that she is Junia de Melo that worked—

Marti: Oh, yeah.

Montserrat: Yeah, because very remember well because at the very beginning, there were the two babies, Estella and Junia working along with Catovsky, and then, afterwards, I mean, Junia decided, okay.

Marti: Well, and because you mentioned Junia, that brings up an important concept, I think, in the history of CLL, and that is, those individuals

who had as their European medical thesis on CLL. And Junia had four papers that appeared in the *British Journal of Hematology*—

Montserrat: Absolutely, absolutely.

Marti: —that came out of her primarily the beginnings of the natural history of the changes in the blood film.

Montserrat: Yeah.

Marti: And Alberto, of course, his was immunophenotyping and somewhat morphology in sense of the large cell CLL. And, well, even David Galton's thesis, his medical thesis. And then we've talked already about—

Montserrat: Hansen, Hansen.

Marti: Hansen, Hansen, when you were talking about not being able to find his copy, his was published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Hematology*, which no longer exists. It's been changed to the *European Society of Hematology*. But, Dr. Galton gave me his signed copy of Hansen's *Scandinavian Journal* single bound copy. I've tried to figure out how to get the right consent and, you know, because I think that book should be published or made available to this community, just like David Galton's thesis, or for that matter *Leucocythemia*.<sup>3</sup> They should be part of a history class or a history course.

Montserrat: It would be, I think the easiest thing should be to talk to Christian Geisler maybe.

Marti: Oh, I know. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Montserrat: I mean, at least he has a copy, and I should have a copy as well, unless, for whatever the reason, I lost it, although I am very careful and I don't—I don't give these books to anyone, and maybe it's sitting around somewhere so I will let you know.

Marti: Maybe it'll show up.

Montserrat: But, particularly, what would be very interesting is to have those who are signed by the author.

Marti: Yeah.

Montserrat: I mean, this—

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<sup>3</sup> Bennett JH. *Leucocythemia, or white cell blood: in relation to the physiology and pathology of the lymphatic glandular system*. Edinburgh, UK: Sutherland & Knox; 1852.

Marti: It increases the value.

Montserrat: Absolutely.

Marti: At least there's sentimental value.

Montserrat: Absolutely.

Marti: Now, in terms of other people in CLL, one person that I'm concerned with locating is Teresa Vallespí?

Montserrat: Vallespí.

Marti: Vallespí.

Montserrat: She is there. [Indicates picture on screen.]

Marti: Okay.

Montserrat: She is there.

Marti: Okay.

Montserrat: She is, it is a very similar history to what happened with Estella Matutes.

Marti: Uh-huh.

Montserrat: She was an associate of mine, and then we did a lot of work on CLL, and her doctoral thesis is on CLL.

Marti: Perhaps the overlap syndrome?

Montserrat: No.

Marti: No.

Montserrat: No. A very nice study with color prints in *British Journal of Haematology*.<sup>4</sup> I mean, she, of course, is the first author. I am the senior. And there is a morphology on different morphological types of CLL. And, afterwards, she left, obviously. She moved to another institution. And just by accident, because these things happen that way, she switched to MDS.

Marti: Ah, okay.

Montserrat: And it's a funny history, because John Bennett, one, give me a call, and said, "Emilio, you know, I am going to be in Barcelona such and

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<sup>4</sup> Vallespí T, Montserrat E, Sanz MA. Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia: prognostic value of lymphocyte morphological subtypes. A multivariate survival analysis in 146 patients. *Br J Haematol*. 1991 Apr;77(4):478-85.

such date." And, so, I organized a small meeting, and Teresa was there, and these were the days in which the FAB—the FAB Group?

Marti: Yeah, yeah.

Montserrat: —was preparing the very first MDS classification. And John was bringing in the manuscript with corrections. I hope that Teresa has kept it. I don't know. And then, I mean, she got into study on MDS, and she abandoned CLL, and now she's an MDS person.

Marti: Also, Junia Melo—

Montserrat: Junia Melo?

Marti: —abandoned CLL?

Montserrat: Oh, Junia Melo was—

Marti: —for CML?

Montserrat: —I liked working with Junia Melo, particularly when she's present, because she laughs at me because when talking about the morphological variance of CLL, and I like to make the point that the person who make the clear-cut distinction, "clear cut," between prolymphocytic leukemia, prolymphocytoid transformation, that was Junia. And Junia says, "Emilio, never forget that I am a molecular biologist now." [Laughs]

Marti: Yeah.

Montserrat: So, it's a lot of fun.

Marti: So—

Montserrat: Who else are you interested in locating?

Marti: Let's see. I think that Teresa—did Estella Matutes ever have a medical thesis?

Montserrat: Yes. And yeah. And again, I would bet my life that her doctoral thesis is on CLL.

Marti: Okay. That I don't know, but I'm wondering.

Montserrat: Yeah. I—yeah. So, I remember very well that we published in a local journal a number of papers with Estella. We were working in the bench with E-rosettes and all of this stuff, and she did a very—she did well. That was tough work, but the very first correlation, I would say, between immunoglobulin myeloid infections, but her doctoral thesis, I don't know whether it was prepared in Barcelona, or when she had already moved to London. I don't know, but it is just a matter of asking her.



Marti: Now, one of the other things that emerges, and I don't think it's unique to CLL. It's more of an evolution of hematology and perhaps even medicine, but it was the effect that immunology had on hematologists/CLL, and many of the people who began immunophenotyping in CLL actually did so before flow cytometry.

Montserrat: Yeah.

Marti: They were using surface immunofluorescents and maybe cytoplasmic—

Montserrat: I did. I did.

Marti: And you kind of gave it away when you said E-rosettes because that was a pretty manual method.

Montserrat: I did, I did, and we did that in cooperation with the immunology department because they were the only ones—and, yeah. I mean, because, immunofluorescents was not yet there. So, and, so, that these very funny studies I mean, looking at T-cells, but looking at E-rosettes, and again, I mean, I am talking, I mean, the point I was making before about putting the things in perspective, when you consider the way in which we were measuring T-cell immunity in CLL, 20, 30 years ago, and the kind of techniques we have nowadays, I mean, is amazing, is really amazing. Or you look at the 8-color cytofluorometry that Alberto uses or that we use in Barcelona or in so many other places. Things are moving so quickly.

And you should get at any cost because it is very funny, and Estella should have it. I should. I should have so many things, but I'm not a well-organized person.

When Daniel Catovsky retired, we had the *Festschrift*. I mean, I don't know why for some reason the English people like using different—

Marti: German words.

Montserrat: The German word. And we had a very nice *Festschrift* and we alluded to the special book, and that was a book with jokes, basically, that was a number of Danny Catovsky's friends making contributions. And there was very, very funny things there. There was somebody saying, "Oh, Danny, you know, with CLL, it's much easier when people like you and when so many, many others were not around." [Laughs] And you should try to get this book as well, because it's...This one, this...I don't remember if I have it, but it's, again, Estella should have it, or Danny. Or Danny.

Marti: If you could go back a little bit to the experience that when you left Salamanca and went to Paris, how soon after finishing your medical degree—

Montserrat: Oh, that was as I thought you were. I mean, I finished my medical studies in 1969. 1969 brought, I had the opportunity of moving this chair, well, not moving, but taking up a vacant chair here in Barcelona. He was alerted to the fact that I was a local person, and he said to me, "Well, do you want to come with me?"

Marti: So Rozman was—

Montserrat: And it was like something five, six years that we fully dedicated to internal medicine, and then we moved. And the department became splitted into people that went to lung medicine. Others went to, basically, we were separated into three: internal medicine, lung medicine, and hematology. And Rozman and I, I mean, we went to hematology. Rozman wanted to at any cost to have me at his side. And then, I mean, to get the extra training, I said, well, I mean, it's—because there were no good location in hematology these days. I mean, we are talking 1973, '74.

So, what other places were to go? I mean, there were very few places. It's the, was Lewis, Mack Lewis in London, Mack Lewis was a [unintelligible] person, always with Jean Bernard in Paris, and America, and America was like—

Marti: Too far away.

Montserrat: —too far away. Yeah.

Marti: And Jean Bernard was a leading hematologist?

Montserrat: Jean Bernard was an intellectual, a leading hematologist and intellectual. He had the...he had this ability of gathering many important people. I mean, just to mention a few people like Seligmann, I mean, you were mentioning the relationship between hematology was there, and Dausset, the Nobel award because of the HLA system that was there. The famous cytologist that we were mentioning, so, so, so many. He built up the first facility for bone marrow transplantation in France, and that was—it was there, and what was the name of the—she is a doctor which is still very active in international committees.

So, she was a real leader, plus she was an intellectual, which is one of the characteristics that Jacques-Louis Binet that show how—Jacques-Louis Binet grew up in the context of Jean Bernard before moving to Pitié Salpêtrière, and this is one of the characteristics that Jacques-Louis Binet also has, which is a high interest in literature, in painting, in architecture.

You know, I mean, Jean Bernard, I always said that it is the very first person in which I realized that this, what the people say, that such and such person has an aura, you know? And I have on the very first time have seen an aura—

Marti: Yeah

Montserrat: With Jean Bernard and it's—and he was very, very kind to me, and he even offered to me to stay in France and to work or to get permanent position for me there, but I had—that was in difficult, difficult days because I had—my family was in Barcelona. We already got one of our daughters, so it was kind of complicated decision. So, Jean Bernard was really so powerful. He influenced even some aspects of the American hematology. He has quarrels with Henry Kaplan, very famous, because of Hodgkin's disease, because they did work.

So, it is very difficult to identify Jean Bernard with a kind of specific disorder. If one, it's prolymphocytic leukemia, because—

Marti: Acute leukemia?

Montserrat: Yeah, promyelocytic, specifically—

Marti: Oh, PML.

Montserrat: Yes, PML, because—so, he was the very first one to demonstrate that continuous doses of the daunorubicin could cure promyelocytic leukemia. That was his original contribution.

But, besides that, he was a big organizer. He was a politician as well. He dominated the politic, the biomedicine and what they called Inserm,<sup>5</sup> which is the institute for research and medicine, that was fully dominated by these guys, particularly Jean Bernard.

Marti: There was a person in the early origins of FAB, a Claude—

Montserrat: Oh, yeah. Claude Sultan.

Marti: Claude Sultan.

Montserrat: Claude Sultan—

Marti: Who apparently went between France, between Paris and England—

Montserrat: That's correct.

Marti: —and noticed that the way in which the diagnosis of myeloid blasts was being made was not identical in the same place. The granule count was—

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<sup>5</sup> Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale

Montserrat: I don't know, I don't know that they match. I don't know that very much, I mean, well in the specific contributions of Claude Sultan, but you are right. I mean, and he was really influential as well. He was really very, very influential, Claude Sultan. I think that unfortunately, he passed away quite young. I mean, it's—he died quite young.

Marti: I'm aware of that. I don't recall the cause of death.