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## **BMNTS - Biopathologie de la myéline, neuroprotection et stratégies thérapeutiques**

Rapport Hcéres

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# HCERES

High Council for the Evaluation of Research  
and Higher Education

Department of Research Evaluation

report on research unit:

Biopathology of Myelin, Neuroprotection and  
Therapeutic Strategies

BMNST

under the supervision of  
the following institutions  
and research bodies:

Université de Strasbourg

Institut National de la Santé Et de la Recherche  
Médicale - INSERM

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,<sup>1</sup>*

Michel Cosnard, president

*In the name of the experts committee,<sup>2</sup>*

Jean-René Cazalets, chairman of the  
committee

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Under the decree N<sup>o</sup> 2014-1365 dated 14 november 2014,

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

<sup>2</sup> 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:** Biopathology of Myelin, Neuroprotection and Therapeutic Strategies

**unit acronym:** BMNTS

**Label requested:** UMR INSERM

**Current number:** 1119

**Name of Director (2016-2017):** Mr Ayikoe Guy MENSAH-NYAGAN

**Name of Project Leader (2018-2022):** Mr Ayikoe Guy MENSAH-NYAGAN

## Expert committee members

**Chair:** Mr Jean-René CAZALETs, Université de Bordeaux

**Experts:** Mr Fabian DOCAGNE, Université de Caen (representative of the CSS INSERM)

Mr Étienne GUILLAUD, Université de Bordeaux (representative of supporting personnel)

Ms Raquel MARIN, University of La Laguna, Spain

Mr Denis VIVIEN, Université de Caen (representative of the CNU)

**Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:**

Mr Jacques NOËL

**Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:**

Ms Catherine FLORENTZ, Université de Strasbourg

Ms Meriem MAROUF-YORGOV, INSERM

**Head of Doctoral School:**

Ms Catherine SCHUSTER, Doctoral School n° 414, "Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé"

## 1 • Introduction

### History and geographical location of the unit

The INSERM unit UMR\_S1119 has been created on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 by INSERM and University of Strasbourg as a single team unit which resulted from the aggregation of three groups of basic researchers, engineers and technicians, clinical neurologists and clinical biochemists. The laboratory is located at the Faculty of Medicine campus in Strasbourg, but will move (early 2018) into a brand new building (Centre de Recherche en Biomédecine de Strasbourg (CRBS)) on the same campus.

### Management team

The unit is under the direction of Mr Ayikoe Guy MENSAH-NYAGAN since its creation in 2013.

### HCERES nomenclature

SVE4 Neurology.

### Scientific domains

The laboratory is dedicated to the development of neuroprotective strategies. Several neurodegenerative or neurological diseases are in the scope of the unit: (1) peripheral neuropathies, including: chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy, hereditary peripheral neuropathy Charcot Marie-Tooth 1, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculoneuropathy; (2) Multiple Sclerosis, Neuromyelitis Optica; (3) Alzheimer disease.

## Unit workforce

| Unit workforce   | Number on 30/06/2016 | Number on 01/01/2018 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| N1: Permanent professors and similar positions                         | 6 [2.32 ETP]         | 6 [2.49]             |
| N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions      | 5 [3]                | 5 [3]                |
| N3: Other permanent staff (technicians and administrative personnel)   | 9 [4.75]             | 10 [6]               |
| N4: Other researchers (Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)          | 5                    |                      |
| N5: Emeritus   | 1                    |                      |
| N6: Other contractual staff (technicians and administrative personnel) | 2                    |                      |
| N7: PhD students   | 5                    |                      |
| TOTAL N1 to N7   | 33 [23.07]           |                      |
| Qualified research supervisors (HDR) or similar positions              | 4                    |                      |

| unit record   | From 01/01/2011 to 30/06/2016 |
|---|-------------------------------|
| PhD theses defended   | 9                             |
| Postdoctoral scientists having spent at least 12 months in the unit           | 5                             |
| Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) obtained during the period | 0                             |

## 2 • Assessment of the unit

### Global assessment of the unit

Since its creation, BMNST has successfully established the merging of basic researchers and clinicians who originally came from three different units. Several of the previous objectives have been reached.

The BMNST unit occupies a unique positioning to the extent that the core of its project is real translational research. The scientific strategy is exemplary focused to increase the relationships between clinical, fundamental and technological transfer. The striking characteristic of the unit is its major anchoring in translational research with three strong pillars: (1) fundamental research; (2) clinical research; (3) collaborations with private pharmaceutical companies. The academic reputation of the unit is excellent and it is very attractive for PhD students and post-docs. Some of the unit PIs have an excellent national or international reputation and are involved in national or international research networks that they supervise. In this context, the transnational positioning of the unit benefits from its setting-up in the University of Strasbourg, which is a natural cross in the research network involving Swiss (Basel) and German (Freiburg) laboratories (public and private). Thanks to the arrival of new researchers, the unit is still increasing its visibility with a very strong emphasis on valorization. Several patents have been released and two start-ups are directly related to the research work performed in the unit.

Clinical research in the unit has an outstanding reputation with international, and indeed national, visibility as indicated by the co-authoring in journals such as *New England Journal of Medicine*.

This is a high multidisciplinary unit that works in a transversal manner, with clinicians, chemists, biologists, neuroscientists working together towards common goals with huge enthusiasm. As a consequence of the managing and scientific strategy, they have adopted the optimal model of structure to tackle the fundamental research and clinical research as well as industrial collaborations in a balanced manner.

Altogether, the BMNST occupies a unique position by leading an ambitious translational project. The strategies and orientation towards the development of chemical compounds that can address pathologies is in phase with the local scientific excellence of the University of Strasbourg in this domain.