



C2VN - Centre en cardiovasculaire et nutrition de Marseille

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:

Center for CardioVascular and Nutrition research

C2VN

under the supervision of
the following institutions
and research bodies:

Aix-Marseille Université

Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique - INRA

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,¹

Michel Cosnard, president

In the name of the experts committee,²

Frits Rosendaal, chairman of the committee

Under the decree No.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:	Center for CardioVascular and Nutrition research
Unit acronym:	C2VN
Label requested:	UMR
Current number:	Inserm UMR 1062 / Inra 1260 + UMR Inserm 1076 + UMR MD2
Name of Director (2016-2017):	Ms Marie-Christine ALESSI Ms Françoise DIGNAT-GORGE Mr Régis GUIEU
Name of Project Leader (2018-2022):	Ms Marie-Christine ALESSI

Expert committee members

Chair:	Mr Frits ROSENDAAL, Leiden University Medical Center, The Netherlands
Experts:	Mr Ramaroson ANDRIANTSITOHAINA, University of Angers (representative of the Inserm)
	Ms Dalila AZZOUT-MARNICHE, University of Paris Saclay (representative of the INRA)
	Ms Anne NEGRE-SALVAYRE, University of Toulouse, Inserm
	Mr Benoit POLACK, University of Grenoble Alpes (representative of the CNU)
	Ms Raffaella SOLETI, University of Angers, Inserm (representative of supporting personnel)
Scientific delegate representing the HCERES:	Ms Florence PINET
Representatives of supervising institutions and bodies:	Mr Pierre CHIAPPETTA, University of Aix-Marseille
	Mr Jean DALLONGEVILLE, INRA
	Ms Meriem MAROUF-YORGOV, Inserm
Head of Doctoral School:	Mr Jean-Louis MEGE, Doctoral School n° 62, « Sciences de la Vie et de la Santé »

1 • Introduction

History and geographical location of the unit

The Inserm unit 99-36 was created in 1999, following initial recognition by Inserm in 1993, under the directorship of Ms Irène JUHAN-VAGUE. It was first renewed in 2004. From 2008, the research unit was under the directorship of Ms Marie-Christine ALESSI. In 2012, the INRA 1260 unit, which focused on human micronutrition, was merged to the NORT Inserm unit (Nutrition, Obesity and Thrombosis unit).

Over the last five-year period, there were three teams, of which: team 1 largely focused on micronutrients, team 2 on aspects of the metabolic syndrome and team 3 on thrombosis and vascular disorders. The unit is located at the faculty of Medicine of Marseille.

In 2000, the Inserm unit VRCM (Vascular Research Centre of Marseille) was formed under the directorship of Mr José JAMPOL. From 2004, the group has been led by Ms Françoise DIGNAT-GEORGE. In 2012 VRCM was restructured, composed of two teams, of which one was focused on the pathophysiology of the endothelium (Ms Françoise DIGNAT-GEORGE), and a second one on endothelial dysfunction in renal disorders (Mr Stéphane BURTEY). The unit is located at the faculty of Pharmacy of Marseille.

The UMR MD2 was founded in 2011 under the direction of Mr Yves JAMMES, with the aim to study cardiovascular adaptation to extreme circumstances, including high altitude and hypoxia. In 2012, the group of Mr Régis GUIEU joined the group, bringing a research interest on the role of the adenosinergic system in the cardiovascular response to hypoxia and hyperoxia. The group studies the impact of oxygen on the cardiovascular system in the broadest sense.

This unit is located at Hôpital Nord. The evaluation over the past period covers three teams from NORT, two teams from VRCM and one team from MD2, all of Aix-Marseille University, that will form a new unit for the upcoming period, starting in 2018, in which the teams will be reshuffled to form five teams, that together constitute the Center for Cardiovascular and Nutrition research (C2VN) under the directorship of Ms Marie-Christine ALESSI. The future unit will be located at the faculty of Pharmacy of Marseille.

Management team

The C2VN unit will be led by Ms Marie-Christine ALESSI and Ms Françoise DIGNAT-GEORGE as deputy director.

HCERES nomenclature

SVE5 - Biologie, médecine et santé.

Scientific domains

The main scientific domains in the unit are nutrition-metabolic, vascular-thrombosis and cardiac fields.

Unit workforce

Unit workforce	Number on 30/06/2016	Number on 01/01/2018
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	48	51
N2: Permanent researchers from Institutions and similar positions	13	16
N3: Other permanent staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	33	36
N4: Other researchers (Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	16	
N5: Emeritus	3	
N6: Other contractual staff (technicians and administrative personnel)	12	
N7: PhD students	39	
TOTAL N1 to N7	164	
Qualified research supervisors (HDR) or similar positions	50	

Unit record	From 01/01/2011 to 30/06/2016
PhD theses defended	46
Postdoctoral scientists having spent at least 12 months in the unit	24
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) obtained during the period	10

2 • Assessment of the unit

Global assessment of the unit

The overall scientific interest of the unit, C2VN, is cardiovascular health and disease, micronutrition and dysoxia, in which it combines laboratory and clinical scientific approaches. Since the last evaluation, the groups coming from 3 different units have taken several steps in their research (reorganization of the teams in terms of people and aims) that have streamlined the research and enhanced the focus, i.e., vascular, cardiac and nutritional. The formation of the new unit C2VN, which involves major changes in the organizational chart, is the logical next step that can only be seen as positive for improving scientific synergism and output. Several new individuals, newly recruited to the unit, have brought high quality and complementary expertise. Their arrival has also introduced a healthier repartition of ages among the senior leadership, which will help continuity at the highest level of quality.

Changes in focus since the last evaluation, that will be carried forward in 2018-2022, are the emphasis on the endothelial molecule CD146 that appears an important marker in disease; the application of new methods to image and quantify ectopic fat; the building of national and international consortia to study the genetics of venous thrombosis; similar developments with application of the newest genetic techniques (next generation sequencing) in the study of rare hereditary platelet disorders; and the further development of models of endothelial plasticity, moving towards biomarker identification and biotherapy development. The projects are generally focused, although some teams have too widespread aims.

Major strengths of the unit are its intrinsic cohesion and strong record of scientific output. As a whole the unit published a high number of scientific articles, of which over 10 percent are in international journals of high impact factor (>10). A high number of fellows successfully defended their thesis, and nearly all of them had at least one publication as first author.

The general atmosphere in the unit appears as open-minded, transparent and generous.

The success in obtaining major grants is heterogeneous among teams, as is the effort put into contacts with the lay public.

In summary, the creation of the C2VN will bring together several strong groups with a long and highly successful history in Marseille and that will all benefit from the new structure.