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INTERMEDIATE REPORT

I have been at Jules Bordet Institute for more than six months. My fellowship project is titled "Evaluation of the role of PIK3CA mutations in PI3K/AKT pathway activation in primary and secondary resistance to lapatinib in gastric cancer". It is the translational part of a phase II randomised controlled study set to start in 2009, under the umbrella of EORTC. The trial has not started yet, and it may not start in its originally proposed form, as newer data have emerged, calling for a larger multicentre phase III trial instead of a more limited phase II study.

My time here, however, has not been wasted. The core competence of the Translational Research Laboratory of Jules Bordet Institute lies at gene microarray experiments, and I am involved in an *in silico* project concerning prognosis prediction for resectable colon cancer using gene expression profiling. Specifically, the prognostic value of the expression of key pathways for cancer initiation or progression is being explored using meta-analytic techniques. The relevant data (eight different datasets with clinical information) have been collected and are currently analysed. We expect to obtain publishable results soon.

I am also involved in the planning of a prognosis prediction trial for stage III colon cancer, mostly in the translational research part of the protocol. The trial is expected to start recruiting patients in the fall of 2009. The recruitment phase will last two years. Measurement of circulating tumour cells (CTCs) is planned, and I am involved in coordinating and facilitating this research. This multicentre national trial is fully developed within Jules Bordet Institute, and I get valuable experience of the scientific, regulatory, and practical issues involved.

In summary, it has been an enjoyable and fruitful experience so far; I hope it will only get better in the coming months.