

## A MARSEILLE-BASED TASKFORCE LAUNCHES TO EXPLORE IMMUNE RESPONSE IN COVID-19 PATIENTS

- **Led by Marseille Immunopole, the exploratory research project EXPLORE COVID-19 brings together the Marseille Public University Hospitals (Assistance Publique des Hôpitaux de Marseille or AP-HM), the Hospital Laveran (HIA-Laveran) and the biotech company Innate Pharma.**
- **The goal is to better understand the immune response to SARS-CoV-2 and explore new ways to fight against it.**

**Marseille France, April 3, 2020** - The French Immunology cluster Marseille Immunopole (MI) and a group of Marseille-based hospitals, including the emergency, intensive care and internal medicine units at La Timone, North and Laveran hospitals and the MI/AP-HM immunoprofiling laboratory at La Timone hospital, along with the biotech company Innate Pharma, have launched an exploratory research task force named EXPLORE COVID-19.

Led by **Éric VIVIER** (Professor at AP-HM - Aix-Marseille University and Centre d'Immunologie de Marseille-Luminy, Chief Scientific Officer at Innate Pharma), the goal of the research project is to gain valuable translational insights to better understand the immune response in COVID-19 patients and identify potential new ways to fight the viral infection.

To date, more than 40 physicians and researchers across the respective organizations have started analyzing the immune response to SARS-Cov2 from blood samples of approximately 100 infected patients at different stages of the disease: 1) patients with no or few symptoms; 2) patients who require oxygen; and 3) a group of severe patients who require prolonged mechanical ventilation. Through this comparative analysis, scientists hope to better understand the impact of the immune response on the evolution of COVID-19 and pathways able to modulate this response. This will include a focus on Innate Pharma targets that may have a role in controlling viral infection or SARS-Cov2-induced inflammation.

*"All the teams at AP-HM are mobilized, not only our care services but also our research laboratories, to provide new therapeutic options to infectious diseases, emergency and critical-care physicians," emphasizes **Emilie GARRIDO-PRADALI**, Director of Health Research at AP-HM. "In these exceptional circumstances, Marseille Immunopole allowed us to mobilize expertise and talent in record time, once again demonstrating the strength of our collective."*

*"Once patients are infected with SARS-CoV-2, their immune system is activated. Unfortunately, for some patients, the system goes into overdrive and "floods" the lungs with inflammatory cytokines, resulting in acute respiratory distress" indicates **Dr. Julien CARVELLI**, physician at the intensive care unit at la Timone.*

*"By exploring the immune response of patients with distinct profiles, we hope to better understand the contribution of different white blood cell populations and quickly identify new therapeutic avenues," explains **Pr. Eric VIVIER**.*

Innate Pharma is funding this study, which is being conducted at its labs in Marseille-Luminy as well as at the MI/AP-HM immunoprofiling laboratory at La Timone hospital, under the leadership of **Dr Frédéric VELY**.

### **Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Marseille**

With 4 hospitals and 3,400 beds, Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Marseille (AP-HM) is the third University Hospital Center in France. It is also the first employer in the region, with over 12,000 employees and almost 2,000 physicians. Its missions are treatment, teaching, research as well as prevention and health education. Its establishments offer a full range of medical specialties, from local health care to advanced treatments for rare and complex pathologies, for adults and children. Its medical and health care teams are committed to providing care that combines excellence with proximity, easily accessible to all.

More on: <http://www.ap-hm.fr> and [@aphm\\_actu](https://twitter.com/aphm_actu)

### **Marseille Immunopole**

As a French immunology cluster, MI federates researchers, clinicians, engineers and industrials who work in the research and development of immunotherapy antibodies against cancers and inflammatory diseases and new diagnostic solutions in immuno-oncology.

MI brings together a unique continuum of excellence ranging from targets discovery to the clinical development of drug candidates and diagnostic tests: Aix-Marseille University (AMU), CNRS, Inserm, 10 research & technology centers, 3 hospitals of Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Marseille (AP-HM), the Paoli-Calmettes Institute, Eurobiomed, biotechs and industrials, first and foremost, the French leaders of immuno-oncology Innate Pharma and HalioDx. Supported by all the public authorities and innovation actors of the territory, the Departmental Committee of the French League against Cancer, the Public Investment Bank and the Commissariat General for Investment, MI is part of the 34 projects of the industry for the future program of the French Government. The headquarters of MI are located at the Timone Hospital in Marseille.

More on: <https://marseille-immunopole.org> and [@Immunopole](https://twitter.com/Immunopole)

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