



agence d'évaluation de la recherche
et de l'enseignement supérieur

Department for the evaluation of
research units

AERES report on unit:

Centre de Recherche Jean-Pierre Aubert

JPARC

Under the supervision of the following
institutions and research bodies:

Université de Lille 2 – Droit et Santé

Institut National de la Santé Et de la Recherche
Médicale

Centre Hospitalier Régional Universitaire de Lille

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Team 2 : Development and plasticity of the postnatal brain

Name of team leader: Mr Vincent PRÉVOT

Workforce

Team workforce	Number as at 30/06/2013	Number as at 01/01/2015
N1: Permanent professors and similar positions	7	6
N2: Permanent EPST or EPIC researchers and similar positions	3	3
N3: Other permanent staff (without research duties)	2	2
N4: Other professors (PREM, ECC, etc.)		
N5: Other EPST or EPIC researchers (DREM, Postdoctoral students, visitors, etc.)	7	3
N6: Other contractual staff (without research duties)	3	1
TOTAL N1 to N6	22	15

Team workforce	Number as at 30/06/2013	Number as at 01/01/2015
Doctoral students	5	
Theses defended	8	
Postdoctoral students having spent at least 12 months in the unit	5	
Number of Research Supervisor Qualifications (HDR) taken	2	
Qualified research supervisors (with an HDR) or similar positions	8	7



Assessment of scientific quality and outputs

The team assembled by the group leader to study the 'Development and Plasticity of the Postnatal Brain' is a very strong one. The group leader and a researcher are internationally recognized investigators doing beautiful work; a junior researcher is a rapidly rising star. They have been productive scientifically, as evidenced by their list of impressive publications. In particular, 4 Cell Metabolism, 1 PLoS Biology, 1 PLoS Genetics and 1 PNAS papers that have emerged from the team can be highlighted.

Assessment of the unit's academic reputation and appeal

A number of researchers in this team are *bona fide* world leaders in their respective subject areas, particularly in the specialties of tancyte biology and hypothalamic development and plasticity. They are also well known and respected in the broader fields of fertility/reproduction and obesity respectively. Part of their strength is that they represent a very 'outward-looking' and cosmopolitan lab, with close interactions with the Saban Research Institute in Los Angeles California, USA. This is consequently reflected in the attractiveness of the lab to many researchers from outside France, which is always a healthy situation for any research institute.

Assessment of the unit's interaction with the social, economic and cultural environment

It is clear that fertility and obesity are critical topics that are ever present in the social, economic and cultural environment of today. The members of this team certainly play their part, actively interacting with the media and lay public, both in terms of disseminating their scientific findings, but also in engaging the lay public on broader scientific issues. Here, the team's links with the Saban and with EU consortia, ensures that this engagement is truly international.

Assessment of the unit's involvement in training through research

Members of this team have displayed a commitment to training of the next-generation of scientists. For example, the team members were key drivers in a FENS (Federation of European Neuroscience Societies) summer school and other European union wide training programmes. They have trained a number of masters, PhD students and post-docs.

Assessment of the strategy and the five-year plan

The strategy and five-year plan is well structured, with a nice mix of exciting projects ranging from low to high-risk prospects. The committee is somewhat surprised however, that the team did not focus a more on the topics in which they are undoubtedly world-leaders. Specifically, tancyte and hypothalamic development are only addressed in one of the objectives; and the actual biology of tancytes, particularly their role as 'gate-keepers' in regulating the transport of peripheral signals and hormones into the hypothalamus, is not addressed at all.

Conclusion

This is a very strong team, within a very good unit, and their strategy is a good example of what is required to ensure international competitiveness.

- **Strengths and opportunities:**

World-leader team in the tancyte and post-natal hypothalamic development fields.

Team is well known in the field of reproduction and obesity.

- **Weaknesses and threats:**

Puzzling lack of ANR (Agence National Recherche) funding.



- **Recommendations:**

Recruitment of an electrophysiologist.

Take advantage of the team's expertise and study the tanycyte biology.

Further increase interactions within the unit.