

Press Release

16 June 2021

Breast International Group's new Executive Board

Brussels, 16 June 2021 – **The Breast International Group (BIG), the largest international not-for-profit organisation for academic breast cancer research groups from around the world, is pleased to announce its new Executive Board who commenced work on 11 June 2021.**

BIG's Executive Board consists of 14 individuals chosen from amongst its member groups, and embodies a broad range of cancer expertise such as medical oncology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology, biostatistics and clinical trials methodology, and translational research. From a geographic point of view, BIG constitutes a network of over 50 like-minded research groups from around the world and reaches across approximately 70 countries on 6 continents. Through its network of groups, BIG connects several thousand specialised hospitals, research centres and world-class breast cancer experts who collaborate to design and conduct pioneering breast cancer research.

Since its foundation in 1999, BIG has run over 50 clinical trials under its umbrella, several of which are considered practice-changing landmark studies, such as the HERA (BIG 1-01) and MINDACT (BIG 3-04) studies. HERA's main results have been published in prestigious journals such as the [*New England Journal of Medicine* \(2005\)](#) and [*The Lancet* \(2017\)](#). The primary results of MINDACT were published in the [*New England Journal of Medicine* \(2016\)](#). More recently, the OlympiA (BIG 6-13) study reported significant results associated with olaparib to prevent cancer recurrence in women with hereditary breast cancer triggered by the BRCA1 and 2 genes, which was also published in the [*New England Journal of Medicine* \(2021\)](#).

More than 30 clinical trials are run or are under development under the BIG umbrella at any time.

BIG's leadership authority

BIG's Executive Board, chaired by Professor David Cameron and supported by BIG Headquarters in Brussels (Belgium), is BIG's main scientific authority. As of 11 June 2021, the BIG Executive Board is represented by the following world-class breast cancer specialists:

- **Carlos Barrios**, medical oncologist, Brazil – LACOG (Latin American Cooperative Oncology Group, www.lacog.org.br)
- **Philippe Bedard**, medical oncologist, Canada – CCTG (Canadian Cancer Trials Group, www.ctg.queensu.ca)
- **Judith Bliss**, medical statistician and trials methodologist, UK – ICR-CTSU (The Institute of Cancer Research, London, Clinical Trials & Statistics Unit (www.icr.ac.uk/our-research/our-research-centres/clinical-trials-and-statistics-unit))
- **Etienne Brain**, medical oncologist, France – EORTC BCG (European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer, Breast Cancer Group, www.eortc.org/event/breast-cancer-group-meeting)
- **David Cameron**, BIG Chair, medical oncologist, UK – University of Edinburgh, NCRI UK and EORTC BCG (Cancer Research UK Edinburgh Centre, National Cancer Research Institute, European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer, Breast Cancer Group, www.ed.ac.uk/cancer-centre, www.ncri.org.uk/groups/breast-group, www.eortc.org/event/breast-cancer-group-meeting)

- **Eva Carrasco**, medical oncologist, Spain – GEICAM (Spanish Breast Cancer Group, www.geicam.org)
- **Boon Chua**, radiation oncologist, Australia/New Zealand – TROG Cancer Research & BCT-ANZ (Trans-Tasman Radiation Oncology Group & Breast Cancer Trials Australia and New Zealand, www.trog.com.au, www.breastcancertrials.org.au)
- **Barbro Linderholm**, medical oncologist – SABO (Swedish Association of Breast Oncologists, www.onkologi.org)
- **Sherene Loi**, medical oncologist, Australia – IBCSG & BCT-ANZ (International Breast Cancer Study Group and Breast Cancer Trials Australia and New Zealand, www.ibcsg.org, www.breastcancertrials.org.au)
- **Seamus O'Reilly**, medical oncologist, Ireland – CT-IRE (Cancer Trials Ireland, www.cancertrials.ie)
- **Evangelia Razis**, medical oncologist, Greece – HeCOG (Hellenic Cooperative Oncology Group, www.hecog.gr)
- **Shigehira Saji**, medical oncologist, Japan – JBCRG (Japan Breast Cancer Research Group, www.jbcrg.jp)
- **Ander Urruticoechea**, BIG Treasurer, medical oncologist, Spain – GEICAM (Spanish Breast Cancer Group, www.geicam.org)
- **Ines Vaz-Luis**, medical oncologist, France – UCBG (Unicancer Breast Group, www.unicancer.fr/la-recherche-unicancer/french-breast-cancer-intergroup-unicancer-ucbg)



Dr Carlos Barrios
Medical Oncologist
Brazil



Dr Philippe Bedard
Medical Oncologist
Canada



Prof Judith Bliss
Medical Statistician &
Trials Methodologist
United Kingdom



Dr David Cameron
BIG Chair
Medical Oncologist
United Kingdom



Dr Etienne Brain
Medical Oncologist
France



Dr Eva Carrasco
Medical Oncologist
Spain



Dr Boon Chua
Radiation Oncologist
Australia
New Zealand



Dr Barbro Linderholm
Medical Oncologist
Sweden



Dr Sherene Loi
Medical Oncologist
Australia



Dr Seamus O'Reilly
Medical Oncologist
Ireland



Dr Evangelia Razis
Medical Oncologist
Greece



Dr Shigehira Saji
Medical Oncologist
Japan



Dr Ander Urruticoechea
BIG Treasurer
Medical Oncologist
Spain



Dr Ines Vaz-Luis
Medical Oncologist
France

BIG's Executive Board represents the leadership of the organisation, reporting to the General Assembly of all member groups. It is primarily responsible for proposing, shaping, and reviewing BIG's strategies and related objectives, and for ensuring the long-term viability of the association.

BIG as a network designs and conducts its own research. The role of the BIG Executive Board is critical to ensure that all clinical trials and programmes carried out under the BIG umbrella are run according to BIG's mission and principles of research conduct and that they fall within BIG's strategy. These principles aim to eliminate bias from the research process, protect academic freedom, and maintain integrity vis à vis patients, both when working with the pharmaceutical partners or when working alone. Particularly important is that BIG commits to prioritising research that otherwise would not be possible and cannot be done by one research group alone. Within this framework, BIG conducts research to advance treatments that make a real difference to women and men with breast cancer.

Professor David Cameron, BIG Chair: “BIG recognises that the ‘global cancer problem’ has particularities in each region and country. I’m delighted by the composition of the new Executive Board – I’m confident that this talented, multi-national and multi-disciplinary group of people will further develop the important advances already set into motion in recent years. In the years to come, the BIG network aims to continue to play an important role in international breast cancer research, allowing for the most efficient conduct of clinical trials and always keeping patients’ interests at the heart of its activities. Further collaboration with research groups in countries where research is scarcer and availability of innovative trials is rarer could be a significant step towards improving treatment and care for women and men with breast cancer, wherever they live.”

And he continues: “Finally, I would like to take this moment to make a special mention of Professor Angelo Di Leo (Head of the Sandro Pitigliani Medical Oncology Department at the Hospital of Prato, Italy) who tragically passed away on 12 June. As a member of BIG since the beginning, and of BIG’s Executive Board since 2010, he contributed to many of BIG’s major trials and research programmes. He also served as a key member of the Scientific and Executive Committee of the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG). Professor Di Leo was a true defender of academic research and international collaboration. He will be missed by all of us, his family and patients.”

BIG’s vision and mission statement

The Breast International Group (BIG) is an independent, international not-for-profit umbrella organisation for academic breast cancer research groups from around the world. We expect our members to share the principle of conducting breast cancer research that is scientifically independent and not motivated by personal profit, meaning that any surplus from BIG’s or its member groups’ research must be reinvested into breast cancer research. **BIG’s vision** is to cure breast cancer through global research and collaboration; **its mission** is to facilitate breast cancer research internationally.

BIG provides a forum for its member groups to:

- combine resources and expertise to conduct research to advance knowledge of the disease and to optimally serve patients;
- establish clinical and translational research priorities;
- reduce the unnecessary duplication of efforts;
- obtain study results quickly;
- collaborate with other scientific networks;
- develop models of collaboration with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry that preserve scientific independence.

BIG’s strategy statement

We believe that it is possible to develop cures for breast cancer through global research and collaboration; our mission is therefore to facilitate and accelerate academic breast cancer research at an international level, and to do so by enabling groups to do more than their individual parts.

BIG commits to prioritising research that otherwise would not be possible and cannot be done by one research group alone by

- having a network of collaborative research groups and data centres, represented by their individual members, who are world-class experts in breast cancer research

- bringing together these individuals to discuss, prioritise and conduct clinical trials and research programmes that will help address the unmet related needs of individuals with breast cancer, without unnecessarily duplicating efforts
- appointing working groups and task forces to develop new research ideas that can only be done within a network such as BIG's
- facilitating access to biosamples and data collected in the context of BIG studies for the conduct of translational research, aiming to optimise individualised diagnosis and treatment
- providing a headquarters with trained and qualified staff who
 - o work closely with BIG members to plan, develop and run BIG studies and translational research
 - o provide support in various forms, ranging from scientific input to legal advice, communications, fundraising, and the organisation of meetings and other events for BIG members and partners
- working according to specific research principles that will preserve academic freedom, even when partnering with commercial entities.

With this framework, the BIG network will thrive and conduct research to advance treatments that make a difference to women and men with breast cancer.

About Breast International Group (BIG)

The Breast International Group (BIG) is an international not-for-profit organisation for academic breast cancer research groups from around the world, based in Brussels, Belgium.

Global collaboration is crucial to make significant advances in breast cancer research, reduce unnecessary duplication of effort, share data, contribute to the faster development of better treatments, and increase the likelihood of cures for patients. Therefore, BIG facilitates breast cancer research at international level, by stimulating cooperation between its members and other academic networks, and collaborating with, but working independently from, the pharmaceutical industry.

In 1999, BIG was founded by Dr Martine Piccart and Dr Aron Goldhirsch with the aim to address fragmentation in European breast cancer research. Research groups from other parts of the world rapidly expressed interest in joining BIG and, two decades later, BIG represents a network of over 50 like-minded research groups from around the world. These entities are tied to several thousand specialised hospitals, research centres and world-class breast cancer experts across approximately 70 countries on 6 continents. More than 30 clinical trials are run or are under development under the BIG umbrella at any one time. BIG also works closely with the US National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN), so that together they act as a strong integrating force in the breast cancer research arena.

BIG's research is supported in part by its philanthropy unit, known as **BIG against breast cancer**. This denomination is used to interact with the general public and donors, and to raise funds for BIG's purely academic breast cancer trials and research programmes. For more information, visit www.BIGagainstbreastcancer.org

Note to the editor - not for publication:

Should you wish to receive further information on this press release, or should you wish to interview one of BIG's Executive Board members, please contact BIG's communications team:

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