

Prof. Martine J. Piccart (Belgium)



Martine J. Piccart, M.D., Ph.D., is honorary professor of oncology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and scientific director at the Jules Bordet Institute (Brussels/Belgium). Earning her medical degrees at ULB and oncology qualifications in New York and London, she is also a member of the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine. She held presidencies of the European Cancer Organisation (ECCO), the European Organisation for the Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC), the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) and served on the American Society of Clinical Oncology Board (ASCO). Presently she is a member of the Board of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) which nominated her as fellow of the AACR Academy in 2013.

A strong advocate for and leader of international research collaborations, Prof. Martine Piccart, together with Prof. Aron Goldhirsch, created the Breast International Group (BIG) in 1996 to foster collaboration and accelerate the development of better breast cancer treatments. The organisation, chaired by Prof. Piccart, became an international not-for-profit organization in 1999, and today unites 59 academic breast cancer research groups from around the world. BIG has more than 30 clinical trials under its umbrella at any one time, and several of BIG's past studies are considered landmark and practice-changing.

Prof. Piccart's relentless drive for results has made her an international leader, who has forged collaborations all over the world and has successfully managed a number of high-profile, Phase 3 clinical trials that have involved multiple international investigators and institutions. Those clinical trials include HERA (HERceptin Adjuvant), MINDACT (Microarray In Node-Negative and 1 to 3 Positive Lymph Node Disease May Avoid Chemotherapy), and ALTTO (Adjuvant Lapatinib and/or Trastuzumab Treatment Optimisation).

In 2014, BIG launched AURORA, an innovative molecular screening programme aiming to understand the molecular aberrations driving breast cancer metastasis and why tumours respond differently to therapy. Over 80 hospitals associated with 10 BIG research groups in 11 countries are taking part. Prof. Piccart believes this type of research will enable much more effective treatment of metastatic breast cancer in the future.

Throughout her career, Prof. Piccart has been honoured with numerous prestigious awards for her research contributions, including the Jill Rose Award for distinguished biomedical research (2009, New York, USA), the William L. McQuire Award in recognition of her contribution in breast cancer research (2009, SABCS, San Antonio/Texas, USA), the Umberto Veronesi Award for the Future Fight Against Cancer (2012, Cancun, Mexico), the David A. Karnofsky Memorial Award in recognition of innovative clinical research and developments that have changed the way oncologists think about the general practice of oncology (2013, ASCO, Chicago, USA), the Susan G. Komen's Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction (2015, SABCS, San Antonio/Texas, USA) and, the 2017 St. Gallen International Breast Cancer Award and most recently, the 2018 Prix Leopold Griffuel for translational and clinical research delivered by the "Association pour la Recherche sur le Cancer" in France and the KNAW Bob Pinedo Cancer Care Award in November 2018 in Amsterdam.

An accomplished clinician and scientist, Prof. Piccart is author or co-author of over 500 publications in peer-reviewed journals.