

Press Release

**Belgian Dr. Martine Piccart has received prestigious international
Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research
and has been honoured for her work in improving breast cancer research and treatment**

Awarded by Susan G. Komen®, the world's largest breast cancer organisation

Brussels, Belgium – 10 December, 2015 – **The Breast International Group (BIG against breast cancer) is proud to announce that on 9 December 2015, its Co-founder and Chair, Dr. Martine Piccart, has received the 2015 Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research.**



From left to right: Dr. George Sledge (Susan G. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor), Dr. Martine Piccart (2015 Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research) and Dr. Eric Winer (Susan G. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor)



From left to right: Dr. Judy Salerno (Susan G. Komen President and CEO), Dr. George Sledge (Susan G. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor), Dr. Martine Piccart (2015 Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Clinical Research), Dr. Myles Brown (2015 Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction in Basic Science) and Dr. Eric Winer (Susan G. Komen Chief Scientific Advisor)

Brinker Award

Susan G. Komen®, the world's largest breast cancer organisation, established the Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction to recognise the efforts of pioneers in two critically important areas of the fight to end breast cancer: clinical research and basic science.

Dr. Martine Piccart, an international leader in the field of breast cancer

On 9 December 2015, Dr. Martine J. Piccart, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Oncology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Head of Medicine at the Jules Bordet Institute (Brussels/Belgium), President of the European CanCER Organisation (ECCO), Member of the Belgian Royal Academy of Medicine, past President of the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO) and the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC), has received this prestigious recognition during the 38th annual San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (8-12 December 2015, Texas/USA), where she has been honoured at an awards ceremony.

A strong advocate for and leader of international research collaborations, Dr. Martine Piccart co-founded the Breast International Group (BIG) to foster collaboration and accelerate the development of better breast cancer treatments. The organisation, which she chairs, unites 56 academic breast cancer research groups from around the world, and has more than 30 clinical trials under its umbrella, several of which are considered landmark studies and practice-changing.

Upon receiving the news of the award, Dr. Martine Piccart said: "I am of course extremely honoured to be granted such a prestigious award. It is through BIG that I hope to change our approach to clinical trials in cancer. This model of collaboration comes at a crunch time for clinical research. BIG's strong international network of academic groups and their centres is committed to 'driving' the breast cancer clinical and translational research agenda. In the years to come, we are going to have many interesting molecules that need to be tested in subsets of patients. That means screening many times more patients before entry into the trial, because only a proportion will have tumours expressing the target protein."

BIG clinical trials

A few years ago, BIG decided to direct its efforts towards research in advanced or metastatic breast cancer, as well as rarer forms of the disease, such as those driven by BRCA1/2 gene mutations. With little or inconclusive data available about optimal treatment options, it is difficult for physicians to choose the best treatment path for individual patients. In 2014, BIG launched AURORA, an ambitious molecular screening research programme aimed at understanding the aberrations driving breast cancer metastasis, and defining which tumours respond well or not to treatment.

Several BIG studies have been practice-changing, putting aromatase inhibitors on the map (BIG 1-98), changing in how we treat young women with breast cancer (SOFT), or leading to a major breakthrough in treating HER2-positive breast cancer (HERA). BIG is also anxiously awaiting the results of the MINDACT trial, run by the EORTC under the BIG umbrella, which, hopefully, will give a clear view on whether the use of a gene signature in addition to standard pathological tests can help determine which women with node-negative and 1-to-3 node positive breast cancer may avoid chemotherapy.

From dream to reality

To conclude, Dr. Piccart shares her vision for the future: "There is a huge gap between our rapidly growing knowledge about the complex molecular-biological landscape of cancer and the extremely slow development of clinically useful and validated biomarkers. As a result, oncologists face serious challenges in daily clinical practice including both the over- and under-treatment of patients and the prescription of ineffective therapies. Personalised medicine is the dream of every oncologist and the legitimate expectation of every cancer patient." And she continues: "Although we've been talking about personalised breast cancer treatment for several years, we're just now on the verge of taking a giant leap from dream to reality. Increasingly sophisticated technologies will continue to help us to further dissect breast cancer into the individual molecular aberrations driving the disease. We see a growing battery of biomarkers being identified and tested for their potential to target therapy at patients most likely to benefit. Essential for the success of this new approach are innovative clinical trials. Driving this highly innovative research forward is a high priority for BIG, its group members, and its partners around the world, whom I sincerely thank for their great support over the years."

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About BIG against breast cancer

The Breast International Group (BIG) is a non-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.



Founded by leading European opinion leaders in 1999, BIG now constitutes a network of 56 collaborative groups from Europe, Canada, Latin America, Asia and Australasia. These entities are tied to several thousand specialised hospitals and research centres worldwide. 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 North American Breast Cancer Groups (NABCG), so that together they act as a strong integrating force in the breast cancer research arena.
www.BIGagainstbreastcancer.org

About Susan G. Komen® and the Brinker Award

Established through a partnership between Susan G. Komen for the Cure® and Brinker International in 1992, the Brinker Award for Scientific Distinction is a marquee award that recognizes pioneering work in breast cancer research and treatment. The Brinker Award honours leading scientists for their significant achievements and contributions in basic and translational science and clinical practice that have advanced the fight to save lives and realize our vision of a world without breast cancer. Since 1992, the roster of Komen Brinker Award laureates has grown to include names of researchers who have made the most significant advances in breast cancer research and medicine. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Brinker Awards for Scientific Distinction. - See more at:
<http://ww5.komen.org/ResearchGrants/AwardsandScholarships.html#sthash.hwWqoudA.dpuf>

Note to the editor – not for publication:

For more information on this press release, for additional background information on BIG and/or its clinical trials, or for an interview with a spokesperson from BIG, please contact:

Valerie Van der Veecken & Oriana Spagnolo
Communications Team
Breast International Group

Tel.: +32 2 541 3524
e-mail: Valerie.VanderVeecken@BIGagainstbc.org,
Oriana.Spagnolo@BIGagainstbc.org
www.BIGagainstbreastcancer.org