



Evry, 13 May 2008

## **PRESS RELEASE**

3<sup>rd</sup> international congress of myology  
*Marseille – 26 to 30 May 2008*

### **Myology and neuromuscular diseases at the turning point towards treatment**

**Walking, reaching out, jumping, getting up, but also breathing, digesting and eating etc. All these acts demanded of our bodies in order that they function correctly are possible thanks to the some 500 muscles that make them up, and which represent 40% of our body weight. While fundamental knowledge about the muscle continues to grow, clinical research is also making great strides. It is in this context – as the turning point towards treatment is getting under way with about forty clinical trials ongoing or in preparation – that the AFM is organising its third international scientific congress devoted to myology from 26 to 30 May in Marseille.**

Myology is not only an emerging science, but – increasingly – a motor of innovation in the field of medicine. It concerns diseases affecting the two most inaccessible organs: the nervous system and the striated muscle. This obstacle has challenged researchers' capacities for innovation and led to the development of new therapeutic leads. Myology 2008, the international scientific congress organised by the AFM in Marseille from 26 to 30 May 2008, will bring together nearly 1000 researchers and muscle disease specialist physicians in order to share the considerable advances made in recent years in the development of these innovative therapeutic leads.

Since Myology 2005, the previous AFM congress in Nantes, decisive progress has been made. New therapeutic leads (gene, cell and pharmacological therapies) are being developed and trials are proliferating. But, as neuromuscular diseases are rare diseases, they present new challenges: patient cohorts are limited, therapeutic principles are increasingly based on a precise genetic mutation rather than on a disease, thus researchers and physicians need new preclinical and clinical tools of therapeutic evaluation.

Combining fundamental research and therapeutic strategies, the programme of this congress is structured around the main groups of neuromuscular disease and

devotes two whole mornings to two transversal themes: the heart, a vital muscle particularly in neuromuscular diseases, and stem cells, whose therapeutic potential is increasingly being demonstrated.

On Friday 30 May a common day with the *International Rehabilitation Conference in Neuromuscular Diseases* will be held, also organised by the AFM. This congress – which brings together specialist physicians and paramedical personnel (mainly physiotherapists) – has been organised on alternate years in different European countries over the last ten years. For this fifth congress, and to accompany the turning point towards treatments, the AFM wished to organise it on the heels of Myology 2008. Thus it will contribute to reinforcing the dialogue between researchers and physicians, particularly concerning the effectiveness of emerging treatments with its underlying difficulty of making an accurate evaluation of the functioning and muscular performance of patients.

*Under the patronage of Valérie Pécresse, Minister of Higher Education and Research and Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, Minister of Health, Sports and Youth. Myology 2008 is supported by the City of Marseille and the Treat-NMD network.*

### **President**

Thomas Voit (Institute of Myology, Paris)

### **Scientific organising committee**

Serge Braun (AFM, Evry)

Margaret Buckingham (CNRS, Pasteur Institute, Paris)

Nicolas Lévy (Inserm, La Timone University Hospital, Marseille)

Judith Melki (Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem)

Eugenio Mercuri (Catholic University, Rome)

Marc Peschanski (I-Stem, Evry)

Jean Pouget (AP-HM, La Timone University Hospital, Marseille)

Jean-Jacques Schott (Inserm, Nantes)

J. Andoni Urtizberea (AP-HP, Hôpital Marin, Hendaye)

### **Myology 2008 in figures:**

- Nearly 1000 participants expected, of whom about 1/3 from abroad
- 92 speakers of whom: 45 are French, 9 American, 6 Italian, 6 British, 4 German, 4 Swiss, 2 Japanese, 2 Canadian and 2 Australian.
- Approximately 500 scientific posters on display

### **Press Contacts**

Estelle Assaf, Géraldine Broudin, Delphine Carvalho  
AFM – Service de Presse  
1, rue de l'Internationale – 91002 Evry cedex  
01 69 47 28 28 – [presse@afm.genethon.fr](mailto:presse@afm.genethon.fr)