

Professor Bruno Lina

Head of the Diagnostic Virology Laboratories in Lyon

Born in Lyon, France in 1961, Bruno Lina enrolled at his local medical school in 1979 and qualified as a doctor of medicine in 1986. He went on to study further, obtaining a PhD in microbiology before rising through the ranks to become a full Professor of Medicine (Microbiology) at the University of Lyon in 2000.



He has held a number of key positions in his career, including Head of the National Reference Centre for Influenza for the South of France, Head of the National Reference Centre for Enteroviruses, Head of the WHO Collaborative Centre for Virus Reference and Research and Head of the Diagnostic Virology Laboratories in Lyon.

He is also President of the Biology Commission at Hospices Civils de Lyon, Vice-president of the European Society for Clinical Virology, and a Member of the Scientific Advisory Board of QCMD (Quality Control for Molecular Diagnostics).

Professor Lina is currently involved in two EU funded projects. He was one of the founding members of a network of networks called IASS (European Influenza Surveillance Scheme), where his work includes his responsibilities as the Head of the National Reference Centre for Influenza for the South of France.

He is also involved with the European Surveillance Network for Vigilance Against Viral Resistance (VIRGIL). In fact he was involved in VIRGIL right from its outset as a member of the Steering Committee. This network of excellence aims to integrate and coordinate the activities of doctors and scientists from institutions across Europe who are investigating viral resistance. Professor Lina heads the surveillance platform for influenza.

The Professor's current responsibilities within VIRGIL include implementing three programs to monitor the rate of emergence of resistant viruses during the use of antiviral agents within very specific cores of patients.

The first program is looking at people who are chronically infected with hepatitis B or C and who may acquire influenza within the next epidemic. These patients are being administered Oseltamivir and the Professor's team is monitoring the possible emergence of a resistant virus in these patients.

The second program involves a similar method of work but with HIV-positive patients. The third group covers elderly institutionalized patients who are being given antiviral agents. The possible emergence of resistance will be studied in both of these groups.

Professor Lina is also involved in providing support – if needed – to foreign virologists and epidemiologists to help them cope with the recent outbreak of avian influenza in their country. This is likely to take the form of technical and personnel support.

The Professor considers his greatest achievement to date to be his cooperation with the French Ministry of Health to organize France's response to a possible influenza pandemic. As can be imagined, this was a huge job which involved liaising with a number of diverse groups. Many of the Professor's recommendations were taken on-board and he is delighted that France is now one of the more well-prepared countries in the world. The French Minister of Health is currently sharing this expertise with colleagues from some other EU countries.

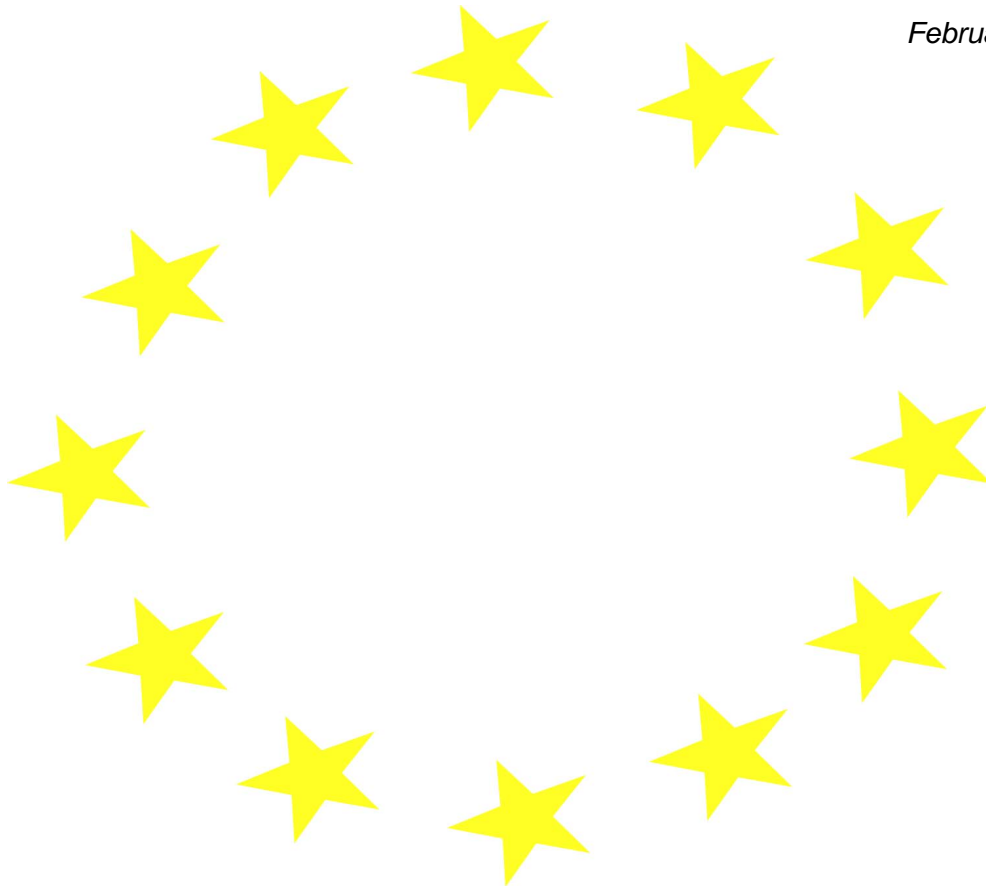
VIRGIL: European vigilance network for the management of drug-resistant viruses.

VIRGIL is a Network of Excellence that aims to integrate and coordinate the research activities of doctors and scientists from institutions across Europe who are investigating viral resistance; in particular to influenza, and hepatitis B and C.

The network gives structure to Europe's previously fragmented research and unites experts in the field, offering coherence and coordination between more than 60 organisations from 14 European countries. In other words, VIRGIL acts like a 'virtual institute' on all aspects of antiviral drug resistance in Europe. It means that Europe can comprehensively address the problem of resistance at an early stage. Staying one step ahead of the virus means a greater chance of remaining in control.

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