

PRESS

# RELEASE



## A PROGRAMME TO FAVOUR FASTER AND MORE LASTING REHABILITATION FOR BREAST CANCER PATIENTS

27 October 2022 – **At the Jules Bordet Institute, improving knowledge of quality of life is inseparable from quality of care. This is why the first patient has joined the Printemps [Spring] study. This pilot project for a multidisciplinary approach to the fatigue experienced after breast cancer or a germ cell tumour in patients under 40 is now a part of the RESTART programme, already in place at the Jules Bordet Institute since January 2022.**

*More than 60% of breast cancer patients experience significant fatigue following treatment.*

Fatigue is the most common symptom following acute treatment against breast cancer, such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery. More than 60% of patients experience significant fatigue, sometimes exacerbated by incapacitating factors both for the patient and for those around them. These include sleeping problems, anxiety, pain and depression. Identifying patients showing significant fatigue after treatment is essential if they are to be offered appropriate follow up to put them on the road to a renewed quality of life, in terms of their physical, emotional, cognitive, social and sexual functioning.

### *The Printemps study for an improved approach to fatigue*

The Printemps project aims to offer global and personalised care for young patients, aged under 40, who present significant fatigue after acute treatment for breast cancer or a germ cell tumour. This exploratory, monocentric, non-randomised study will begin between one and three months following treatment. The Printemps project will be integrated in the RESTART project for multidisciplinary follow up after breast cancer that was launched in January 2022 at the Jules Bordet Institute and currently has 95 participating patients.

*"It is essential to better understand the mechanisms involved in fatigue among patients who have had cancer. It is an extremely common symptom that impacts significantly on quality of life as well as on family and professional life. The Printemps study will make it possible to offer these patients personalised, multidisciplinary care and to better understand this symptom,"* explains Dr Polastro, oncologist at the Jules Bordet Institute and instigator of the Printemps study.

### *Fatigue followed up by a multidisciplinary team*

The team that supports the patient consists of an oncologist, a psychologist, a physiotherapist, a dietician and a nurse-coach. The patient undergoes a comprehensive assessment by the team members to detect the organic or psychological factors that are contributing to fatigue and evaluate the impact of the fatigue on day-to-day life and level of physical activity. On this basis appropriate and personalised follow-up is proposed.

This assessment permits a specific follow-up that includes psychological sessions, consultations with a dietician and physical training. The programme is scheduled over 13 weeks. The patient is subsequently monitored for 18 months so as to compare their quality of life, level of fatigue, working life and level of any sports activity before and after the programme. The aim is to evaluate the feasibility of such a programme and, we hope, allow many patients to benefit from it as rapidly as possible.

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## ABOUT THE H.U.B

The Hôpital Universitaire de Bruxelles (H.U.B) is the academic hospital of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), which unites the Jules Bordet institute, the Erasme Hospital and the Queen Fabiola Children's University Hospital (HUDERF) since 2021.

As an international reference center, located in the heart of the Brussels Region, the H.U.B offers high quality general, oncological and pediatric care.

This excellent care, accessible to all, is enriched and sustained by a dual approach of scientific research and teaching for the caregivers of tomorrow.

In 2022, the H.U.B. is composed of more than 6,000 employees who share the following values: Interest of the patient, Team spirit, Commitment, Solidarity, Diversity and Inclusion, and the principle of Free enquiry.