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CHRONIC LYMPHOCYTIC LEUKEMIA

A scholar of blood and beauty: remembering Prof. Jacques-Louis Binet (1932–2024)

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Prof. Jacques-Louis Binet was born in Paris on May 1, 1932, and died there on December 17, 2024. He was the youngest of three sons of Prof. Leon Binet, a distinguished physiologist, member of the French Academy of Science, and Dean of the Paris Faculty of Medicine. Jacques-Louis earned his bachelor's degree at Lycée Louis-le-Grand before studying medicine at the Paris Faculty of Medicine. In 1955, he became an Interne des Hôpitaux de Paris, earning a Gold Medal upon his promotion.

Prof. Binet trained under several eminent figures: Prof. Jean Bernard, who introduced modern acute leukemia therapy in France; Prof. Georges Mathé, a pioneer of immunotherapy; and Prof. Marcel Bessis, a renowned histologist. In 1962, he was appointed Chef de Clinique at the Clinique des Maladies du Sang under Prof. Bernard. He trained in electron microscopy with Nobel Laureate Prof. George Palade in 1965. By 1966, Jacques-Louis had achieved professorial status and, starting in 1969, served as chief of the Hematology Department at Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.

In 1966, Prof. Binet married Sylvie Léaud. They had two children, Guillaume and Sophia.

At a time when most hematologists focused on acute leukemia and high-grade lymphomas, Jacques-Louis dedicated his career to studying B-lymphocytes and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). His early research, alongside Profs. Bessis, Bernard, and Bede Morris, explored the circulation of B-cells. However, he is best known for developing the Binet classification for CLL, a prognostic system widely used today, especially in Europe. He was close friends with Prof. Kanti Rai, who developed a parallel classification widely adopted in the United States. Prof. Binet played a key role in uniting French clinicians into one of the first cooperative groups in France for CLL, which continues to produce significant scientific discoveries. In 1979, Profs. Binet, Rai, and colleagues founded the International Workshop on CLL (iwCLL), a leading research organization in the field.

Jacques-Louis Binet's interests extended well beyond medicine. He was a connoisseur of modern and contemporary art, and his deep knowledge and teaching skills made him a distinguished instructor at L'École du Louvre and a compelling speaker on French culture. He delivered memorable lectures on topics such as the representation of blood in art and the architectural history of hospitals, notably at French Haematology Society conferences. As President of the Advisory Board of the National Center for Contemporary Art, he was a valued advisor on museum acquisitions. A prolific author, his works include *The Blood and Men* (2001), *From Matisse to Infinite Painting* (2012), and *The Architects of Medicine* (1996), which analyzes the evolution of hospital architecture as a reflection of societal change.

Prof. Binet's career was crowned by his election to the French Academy of Medicine in 1999, where he eventually became Permanent Secretary. He was also an early media innovator, co-producing scientific programs for France Culture and serving as president of the scientific unit at Sept, the television channel that preceded Arte.

Prof. Binet was truly a Renaissance man. He held simultaneous positions as Professor of Medicine at Pierre and Marie Curie University, Professor of Contemporary Art at L'École du Louvre, and President of the Advisory Board of the National Center for Contemporary Art (CNAC). His empathy and charisma shone in his relationships with patients, colleagues, and students.

He is survived by his children, Guillaume and Sophia.

Reflecting on his dual career, Binet once said:

"I wouldn't have been outstanding in either discipline but my life was enriched by both. Moving between art and medicine brought immense joy and helped me endure life's hardships."

With his passing, hematology is not widowed, but orphaned.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests.



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