INTRODUCTION

With a high incidence, low survival rates and limited availability of effective treatment, melanoma is one of the research priorities for health authorities and is considered as priority of public health (Figure 1). Optimizing the development of both academic and industrial research requires the availability of information on the characteristics of patients and clinical data.

To meet this need, the French Multidisciplinary Melanoma Group (GMFMel) in collaboration with INCa (French National Cancer Institute) has set up in April 2011 a Clinical Investigation network for melanoma called:

RIC-Mel : network for Research and Clinical Investigation on Melanoma

Aims of our network were to promote translational, clinical and epidemiological research.

To achieve these goals, objectives of our network were:
- To federate the clinical cancerology and dermatology sites and the existing networks in melanoma,
- To set up and maintain a national clinical database.

METHODS

Each participating center filled in the database its active file of patients, for which data are treated confidentially. Database is available on the Internet at any given moment but each clinician have an exclusive access for his data. All patients with a melanoma could be included, regardless of stage or location of the primary tumour (ocular, mucosal, cutaneous or unknown). All patient included in the database had given its consent to participate. Collected data describes patient characteristics, disease history and follow-up until death (Figure 2).

RESULTS

Nowadays, the RIC-Mel network includes 43 hospitals’ dermatology centers and 6 cancer centers located all over the country (Figure 3). The database launched in March 2012 was approved by French Health Authorities.

After 6 years, more than 21,970 patients were included (Figures 4).

Moreover, epidemiological andomedical projects with different purposes had been already realized (Figure 6).

CONCLUSIONS

The RIC-Mel network:
- is a structured network able to federate centers involved in melanoma patients care,
- develop and maintain a national database with almost 22,000 patients included nowadays,
- provide expertise and knowledge of melanoma (pathology, treatments and patient care),
- listen, advice and support all project leaders.

Thanks to this, the RIC-Mel network demonstrated:
- the capacity to support research, from both academic and industrial partners,
- the adaptability based on a huge service offering.

In fact, valorization of the database through all research projects performed with academic and industrial partners highlights:
- that is an efficient instrument to satisfy translational and epidemiological research,
- that is a pertinent way through relevant information could be communicated rapidly and accurately.

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