BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

NAME: **Maria Gounari**

POSITION TITLE: **Post doctoral researcher in lymphomas molecular and cellular biology, Institute of Applied Biosciences, National Center for Research and Technology Hellas, Thessaloniki, Greece**

EDUCATION/TRAINING

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE *(if applicable)*	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY
Department of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece	Diploma	07/2007	Molecular Biology and Immunogenetics
Department of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece	Ph.D	03/2014	Molecular Biology and Immunology
Unit of B Cell Neoplasia, San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan, Italy	Postdoctoral	09/2016	Molecular and Cellular Biology

A. Personal Statement

Since 2006 I have been involved in research related to the biology of B-cell malignancies and was exposed to different environments that gave me the opportunity to interact with experts in the field of B cell lymphoma research, immunology and structural biology and to gain hands-on experience in several molecular biology and biochemical techniques.

The research focus of my dissertational thesis was somatic hypermutation of immunoglobulin genes in chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL). I conducted my PhD in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in collaboration with San Raffaele Scientific Institute, in Milan, Italy under the supervision of Dr. Kostas Stamatopoulos and Dr. Paolo Ghia, both leading experts in lymphoma research. My PhD work focused on the production and study of monoclonal antibodies from patients with CLL that led to the identification of antigens involved in the pathogenesis of CLL.

In parallel, during my PhD and my postdoctoral research in San Raffaele Scientific Institute, I was involved in multi-disciplinary research projects, mainly in structural studies of immunoglobulins in CLL and functional and signaling studies of leukemic cells, thus broadening my research interests and expertise. In detail, my close collaboration with Dr. Massimo Degano (Head of Biocrystallography Unit, San Raffaele Scientific Institute), a biochemist with long-standing experience on immune cell receptor structure and function gave me the opportunity to gain knowledge in protein biochemistry and relevant techniques and led to determination, for the first time of CLL immunoglobulins' structure that elucidated the precise molecular details of antigen recognition.

As part of my postdoctoral research, I visited Dr. Hassan Jumma's lab in Ulm, an international expert in immunology and the pioneer of cell-autonomous signaling, a phenomenon that refers to the homotypic B cell Receptor (BcR) recognition resulting in cell activation and has been reported to be unique to CLL BcRs. This training resulted in a fruitful and long-term collaboration.

I have participated in several EU- or nationally-funded research projects and I have succeeded in getting funding by EMBO and Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) for my post-doctoral studies. In many cases I have been the person responsible for the organization of joint studies with other labs and institutions, thus acquiring good communication and project design skills.

Currently I work as a post-doc researcher at the Institute of Applied Biosciences, National Center for Research and Technology Hellas, Thessaloniki, Greece and my research focus is on (i) functional and cellular studies in order to unveil the role of microenvironmental interactions in human B cell malignancies and (ii) functional and structural characterization of immunoglobulins across a variety of B cell malignancies.

B. Positions and Honors

Positions and Employment

2006 **Internship,** Laboratory of Cytogenetics, Department of Haematology and HCT Unit, G. Papanicolaou Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece.

2006-2009 **Internship,** Laboratory of Molecular Biology Department of Haematology and HCT Unit, G. Papanicolaou Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece

2011-2012 **External collaborator**, Institute of Agrobiotechnology, National Center of Research and Technology Hellas, Greece

2009-2014 **Ph.D student**, Unit of B Cell Neoplasia, San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan, Italy

2015 **Internship,** Institute of Immunology, Ulm Univeristy, Ulm, Germany.

2014-2016 **Post-doc researcher,** Unit of B cell Neoplasia, San Raffaele Scientific Institute, Milan, Italy

2016-today **Post-doc researcher,** Institute of Applied Biosciences, National Center for Research and Technology Hellas, Thessaloniki, Greece

Professional Memberships

2010-today Member, Hellenic Society of Haematology, Greece

2014-today Member, European Hematology Association

Honors

2002 Honor from the School of Biology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki for the 3rd best score in score in the entry exams (score: 18440/20000)

2003 Scholarship from Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) for the best scores in the exams conducted at the end of 1st and 2nd semester.

2013 Best abstract award, Hellenic Society of Haematology, 24th annual congress, Greece

2016 Best abstract award, Hellenic Society of Haematology, 27th annual congress, Greece

2017 Award for the scientific project: “Distinct homotypic B-cell receptor interactions shape the outcome of chronic lymphocytic leukemia” by AIL Modena at the meeting "Novita' in Ematologia: la comunicazione, le terapie innovative e di supporto, la sostenibilita", Modena, Italy.

C. Contributions to Science

Research articles in peer-review journals:

1. Kostareli E, Hadzidimitriou A, Stavroyianni N, Darzentas N, Athanasiadou A, **Gounari M**, Bikos V, Agathagelidis A et al. *Molecular evidence for EBV and CMV persistence in a subset of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia expressing stereotyped IGHV4-34 B-cell receptors.* Leukemia; 2009 May.
2. Kostareli E*, **Gounari M***, et al. *Antigen receptor stereotypy across B-cell lymphoproliferations: the case of IGHV4-59/IGKV3-20 receptors with rheumatoid factor activity.* Leukemia; 2012 May.* **shared first author**
3. Kostareli E, **Gounari M**, Agathangelidis A, Stamatopoulos K. *Immunoglobulin gene repertoire in chronic lymphocytic leukemia: insight into antigen selection and microenvironmental interactions.* Mediterr J Hematol Infect Dis; Aug 2012.
4. **Gounari M**, et al. *Excessive antigen reactivity may underlie the clinical aggressiveness of chronic lymphocytic leukemia stereotyped subset 8.* Blood; 2015 Jun.

5. Ntoufa S, Papakonstantinou N, Apollonio B, **Gounari M**, et al. *Indolent chronic lymphocytic leukemia stereotyped subset #4 exhibits B cell anergy regulated by TLR1/2 and the mir-17~92 cluster*. J Immunol; 2016 May.
6. Minici C*, **Gounari M***, et al. *Distinct homotypic B-cell receptor interactions shape the outcome of chronic lymphocytic leukemia*. Nature Communications; 2017 June. *** shared first author**
7. ten Hacken E, **Gounari M***, et al. *Calreticulin as a novel B cell receptor antigen in chronic lymphocytic leukemia.* Haematologica; 2017 July. Epub ahead of print. *** shared first author**

D. Additional Information

Completed Research Support

Scholarship from Greek State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) for the academic year 2015-2016: IKY Fellowships of excellence for postgraduate studies in Greece - SIEMENS program

EMBO short term fellowship for visiting the Institute of Immunology, Ulm Univeristy, Ulm, Germany (04/ 2015 - 05/2015).

"Harnessing tumour cell/microenvironment cross talk to treat mature B-cell tumours", supported by Italian Association against Cancer (AIRC), Milano, Italy
PI: Paolo Ghia
Duties: Experimental design, Wet lab experiments, Data Analysis
Participated with: Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele

"Dissecting the role of stereotyped receptors in chronic lymphocytic leukemia**",** supported by Italian Association against Cancer (AIRC), Milano, Italy
PI: Paolo Ghia
Duties: Experimental design, Wet lab experiments, Data Analysis
Participated with: Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele

"Unraveling the role of antigenic stimulation in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia as a potential therapeutic target" supported by Italian Association against Cancer (AIRC), Milano, Italy,
PI: Paolo Ghia
Duties: Experimental design, Wet lab experiments, Data Analysis
Participated with: Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele

"A multidisciplinary investigation into the pathogenesis of chronic lymphocytic leukemia for the identification of novel molecular therapeutic targets" supported by the Cariplo Foundation, Milano, Italy
PIs: Kostas Stamatopoulos and Paolo Ghia
Duties: Experimental design, Wet lab experiments, Data Analysis
Participated with: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki/G. Papanicolaou Hospital