

# B-Stat News

The Newsletter  
of the  
*Belgian Statistical Society*  
*Belgische Vereniging voor Statistiek*  
*Soci t  Belge de Statistique*

Number 39 – January 2007

Editeurs responsables/Verantwoordelijke uitgevers :  
Olivier Thas, Universiteit Gent  
Coupure Links 653, 9000 Gent  
Sophie Vanbelle, Service de Biostatistique, Universit  de Li ge  
CHU Sart Tilman, 4000 Li ge

## THE COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY

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### **Website of the Society**

[www.sbs-bvs.be](http://www.sbs-bvs.be)

### **Webmaster**

Laurence Seidel : [laurence.seidel@ulg.ac.be](mailto:laurence.seidel@ulg.ac.be)

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## EDITORIAL

### *Membership is important !*

Another year over! Time has come again to send all members of the SBS-BVS my personal wishes for a happy and successful New Year 2007.

Another year over! Time passes by rapidly. Emails and electronic transactions change our daily life ever more, not only in depth but also in pace. On Saturday morning, when browsing through my infinite list of weekly emails, those received on Monday or Tuesday seem to me ages ago. By contrast, long time received emails can be retrieved in a second, giving me the impression that I got them yesterday. I remember the time when a scientific paper published in one of the best journals was a matter of discussion and appreciation for many years, while today nobody would talk about it a month later. The same applies to daily life events and persons. Evanescence is probably a good word to term the 21st century information society.

Another year over! Time has been plain, however. The SBS-BVS and its members have been active not only in Belgium but also worldwide in many ways. I would like to specially commend on the UCL statistical team which organised the BSS2006 annual meeting in Houffalize on a short notice but with a remarkable success. The afternoon for young statisticians, sponsored in part by the society, gathered over 60 participants and was highly appraised. I wish the group in Antwerp in charge of BSS2007 the same successful outcome.

Another year over! Time has also come to renew your annual dues. Everyone in the society should contribute to its financial health and stability. One way to do this is to promptly pay the membership fee. Delays cause costly reminders, unnecessary paperwork and headaches to the treasury office. Today, there are also legal reasons for doing so. According to the new law on “asbl/vzw”, the official list of members has to be established and deposited every year. Members leaving the society for any reason should always notify the secretarial office about their resignation. Likewise address changes should be rapidly reported to the secretary. I hope that all members will recognise these elementary rules which apply to all societies.

Members can live without the society but the society can not live without its members! Like cells in the human body, members are the cellular components of the society, making it alive, active, and moving forward. Membership is really important!

Adelin Albert  
President of the SBS-BVS

**14<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BELGIAN STATISTICAL  
SOCIETY, HOUFFALIZE  
12 - 13 OCTOBER 2006**

The BSS 2006 meeting was organized by the Institute of Statistics of UCL and took place in the Ol Fosse d'Outh seminar center at Houffalize in the province of Luxemburg. This meeting was organized jointly with the biostatistical section of the society and with three statistical groups linked to SBS-BVS: b-ENBIS (the Belgian branch of the European Network for Business and Industrial statistics), RSS-3CC (the Three Country Corner local group of the Royal Statistical Society) and the Quetelet Society.

In addition to the traditional activities, this 2006 edition was marked by two special events: it was preceded by a special afternoon for young statisticians and was followed by a workshop and a hike on Friday afternoon. In total 141 persons registered: 63 students, 48 participants from academics and 31 from private companies or other organisations.

The afternoon for young statisticians started the day before the official meeting on 11 October. During this stimulating and pleasant event, three young Belgian PhDs in statistics presented their career path and the asset of having a PhD when working in private companies or public organisations. Each of the 60 participants had also the opportunity to discover the work of the others in a quiz-based poster-session.

On October 11 and 12, a varied and rich scientific program was proposed to the participants of the "official" SBS-BVS meeting. Each of them could find presentations in his own specialisation and open his mind to various other subjects. The five plenary sessions given by the invited speakers were especially appreciated for their scientific quality and the clarity of the presentations adapted to the variety of the public. They covered a very broad range of topics such as: data mining (Bart Baesens – KULeuven), statistical problems in organ donation and transplantation (Dave Collett -UK Transplant), sampling methodology in the Pisa study (Erich Neuwirth - University of Vienna), nonparametric regression in survey estimation (Jean Opsomer - Iowa State University) and statistical and mathematical models in epidemiology (Ziv Shkedy, Hasselt University).

These plenary sessions were completed by six thematic sessions organised jointly with our partners b-ENBIS, RSS-3CC, Quetelet society and the Biostatistical session of SBS-BVS. Within the 30 presentations, many PhD

students had the opportunity to present their work. This stimulating oral scientific program was completed by a poster session (coupled with a cocktail) where 34 young statisticians presented their work and which showed how diverse and rich the work of the young generation in Belgium can be. In the workshop on Friday afternoon, Christian Ritter (UCL and Monnet Center) offered to 25 participants an introduction to the “deployment of statistics in an office environment”.

As usual, the atmosphere of the conference was friendly and pleased. The winners of the quiz of the poster session opened the bar on Wednesday afternoon with the bottles of Chouffe they gained in the competition. This local Belgian beer set the tone to the two relaxed and happy evenings of the conference. The hike on Friday afternoon was also a success: 15 participants could discover the beautiful neighbourhood of the conference centre and finish their afternoon on the terrace with the workshop participants around cakes and ... some more beer.

The organising and the scientific committees want to thank all the participants for their contribution to the success of this meeting! We are looking forward to meet you again next year in Antwerp!

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BELGIAN  
STATISTICAL SOCIETY  
University of Namur, 14 February 2007**

The SBS-BVS annual General Assembly will take place at the “Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix” in Namur (Auditorium MA1, second floor in the Economics Building), on Wednesday 14 February 2007 at 17:00.

It will be preceded, in auditorium E1 (first floor in the same building), by two scientific talks according to the following program:

14:30 – 15:30    *Probabilistic models in cluster analysis*

Hans-Hermann BOCK  
RWTH Aachen University, Germany

15:30 – 16:00    Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00    *Clustering in the presence of outliers*

Günter RITTER  
University of Passau, Germany

You are all cordially invited.



# 15TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BELGIAN STATISTICAL SOCIETY

**Antwerp, 19-20 October 2007**



The 15th annual meeting of the Belgian Statistical Society will be held on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 October 2007 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Antwerp. The meeting will be preceded by a Young Statistician Day in the same location on Thursday 18 October.

StatUa, the forum for statistics and applied statistics at the University of Antwerp, will take care of the practical organisation of the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual meeting, which will feature sessions organized by the Biostatistical Section of the Belgian Statistical Society, the Three Country Corner local group of the Royal Statistical Society, the Quetelet Society and the Belgian branch of the European Network for Business and Industrial Statistics in addition to the contributed sessions. Workshops will be scheduled on Saturday afternoon.

More details will soon be posted at [www.sbs-bvs.be](http://www.sbs-bvs.be) !

## **FIRST IBS CHANNEL NETWORK MEETING**

### **ROLDUC, THE NETHERLANDS**

The first IBS Channel Network meeting will be held at the conference centre Rolduc (12th century former abbey, The Netherlands) May 8-11, 2007. The scientific programme committee has selected the following three broad themes as the invited programme:

#### **High-dimensional data**

Opening Keynote lecture: Ulrich Mansmann  
Invited lectures: Age Smilde, Cajo Ter Braak

#### **Methods in epidemiology**

Invited lectures: Daniel Commenges, Miguel Hernan

#### **Adaptive designs in clinical trials**

Invited lectures: Chris Jennison, Fabian Tibaldi  
Closing Keynote lecture: Marc Buyse

You are invited to submit an abstract for a contributed oral/poster presentation. Contributions may cover a wide range of topics, but contributions devoted to one of the topics of the invited sessions are particularly encouraged. Deadline for abstracts is: January 30, 2007. More information is available on the conference website:

[www.bms-aned.nl/Rolduc2007](http://www.bms-aned.nl/Rolduc2007)

For your information, the Channel Network is a loose confederation of IBS Regions, founded at the end of 2005, comprising the Belgian Region, the British and Irish Region, the French Region and the Netherlands Region. It is managed by a Steering Group with members drawn from each of constituent regions, and currently coordinated by Andrew Mead from the British and Irish Region. The Channel Network Conference is intended to be the major activity of the Channel Network, and will be held every two years, with the venue rotated around the constituent regions.

## FORTHCOMING STATISTICAL EVENTS

**February 16, 2007** – Diepenbeek (University of Hasselt) room C110  
*A latent class mixture model for incomplete longitudinal Gaussian data*  
Lien Beukens (Universiteit Hasselt)

**February 23, 2007** – Diepenbeek (University of Hasselt) room C105  
*Flexible estimation of serial correlation in linear mixed models*  
Jan Serroyen (Universiteit Hasselt)

**February 23, 2007** – Louvain-la-Neuve (Institut de statistique, UCL)  
Special afternoon on "*Nonparametric estimation under constraints*"  
J r mie Bigot, Universit  Toulouse III, France  
Geurt Jongbloed, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**March 2, 2007**– Diepenbeek (University of Hasselt) room C105  
*Predictive modeling of failure time data: a recast of the c-index*  
Kristiaan Pelckmans (ESAT,K.U.Leuven)

**April 26–27, 2007** – Diepenbeek (University of Hasselt)  
*Statistical inference for dependent data.*

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS\*

**Cedric Heuchenne**, formerly at the Institute of Statistics UCL, is now teaching at the School of Business ULg.

**Frans Desmedt**, National Institute of Statistics, retired in 2006.

**Philippe Lambert**, formerly professor of biostatistics at UCL, has been appointed professor of statistics at the Institute of Human and Social Sciences, University of Liège.

**Didier Renard**, formerly at the Eli Lilly Development Centre, Mont-Saint-Guibert, moved to Novartis in Basel, Switzerland.

**Peter Slock**, formerly at the National Institute of Statistics, is now working at the “Belgian national office for pensions”, Brussels.

\*Members are invited to notify the B-Stat news editors about professional or position changes.

## RECENT PHD THESES

### Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven)

Roselinde Kessels. *Optimal Designs for the Measurement of Consumer Preferences*. (23/10/2006) – Promotors: Prof. Martina Vandebroek and Prof. Peter Goos (UA).

This thesis focuses on the design of conjoint experiments for measuring the trade-offs people make in choosing between alternative products and service providers. Marketing consultants and researchers frequently use these experiments to predict people's choices for prospective goods. In this way, they assist companies in launching innovative products or services. The entire process from collecting consumer preference data to analyzing them and simulating the marketplace is generally known as conjoint analysis.

Conjoint analysis assumes that a product or service can be decomposed into its component attributes and levels. A good is thereby described by levels for each of the attributes. For example, a car is characterized by the attributes price, transmission, airbags, door lock and audio system. A possible profile or alternative of a car is then a car with a price of 18,000€, manual transmission, front and dual side airbags, an auto lock function and a radio and CD player. By presenting a series of profiles to a number of test persons and finding out which are most preferred, conjoint analysis allows the determination of the relative importance of each attribute and level in the purchasing decision. The relative values or utilities respondents derive from the attribute levels are also called part-worths. Conjoint analysis is based on the fact that the part-worths can better be measured when the attributes are *considered jointly* rather than in isolation.

Respondents usually evaluate profiles in one of the following two ways. They either choose their preferred profile from a set of profiles, also called a choice set, and they repeat this task for several other choice sets presented to them. Such a conjoint experiment is a choice-based conjoint experiment, also referred to as a conjoint choice or discrete choice experiment, or more succinctly, a choice experiment. Or, the respondents rate a number of profiles on a scale, for example a 10-point scale. This type of conjoint experiment is a rating-based conjoint experiment. In the thesis we deal with the question of how to properly design choice-based and rating-based conjoint experiments. This means that we search for profiles that, when administered to respondents, yield maximum information on the part-worths. To find the best possible design in each case, we make use of design criteria or optimality criteria resulting in optimal designs. The thesis is split into two parts each involving the design of one type of conjoint experiment.

## **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KULeuven)**

Rembert De Blander. *Essays on Endogeneity and Parameter Heterogeneity in Cross-Section and Panel Data*. (28/04/2006) - Promotor: Prof. Marinus Verbeek (Erasmus University Rotterdam), Co-promotor: Prof. Geert Dhaene (K.U.Leuven)

In this thesis, both the Correlated Random Coefficient (CRC) model as well as a dynamic panel data model are considered.

The CRC model is a random coefficient model the crucial characteristic of which is the possible correlation between regressors and coefficients. Assuming that the constant term is also associated with a random and correlated coefficient, the CRC model encompasses standard models that allow for endogenous regressors. A first paper presents an estimator for the linear CRC model which is an extension of Garen's (1984) Selectivity Bias Method, but the outcome equation is augmented with more terms compared to Garen. In a second Paper, I discuss semiparametric estimation of a linear correlated random coefficient model (Heckman and Vytlačil (1998)). I include two unknown functions of the residuals in the equation of interest, one of which is multiplied by the treatment variable. I propose to estimate these unknown functions by series regression, resulting in root N-consistent estimation of the parameters of interest. By making use of the unified treatment of models for truncation, sample selection and limited dependent variables (Heckman (1976)), and of generalized residuals (Gouriéroux et al. (1987)), this approach is valid as well for discrete treatments. A third paper, finally, considers estimation methods for the CRC model when panel data are available, which allows for estimation of the average treatment effect by IV as described by Wooldridge (2003), using Hausman and Taylor (1981) style instruments. The part concerning dynamic panel data focusses on the derivation of unit root tests for fixed time dimension, which extends Harris and Tzavalis' (1998) tests to panel data models with AR(1) errors. The limiting distributions of the test statistics (for increasing N and fixed T) are shown to be normal. Closed-form expressions for the first and second moments of the test statistics are derived. Heterogenous initial conditions and drift in the data generating process are taken into account by including fixed effects and individual-specific linear time trends in the regression. This inclusion makes the least squares estimators of the autoregressive parameters inconsistent for fixed T, and appropriate bias-corrections are proposed.

Electronic access:

<http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/doctoraatsverdediging/cm/3H05/3H050156.htm>

## Universiteit Gent (UGent)

Beatrijs Moerkerke. *To be or not to be significant: on more powerful methods for multiple testing* (17/11/2006) - Promotor: Prof. dr. E. Goetghebeur.

Recent advances in technology are leading to the production of enormous amounts of data. To turn these data into information, statisticians are equipped with statistical models and techniques for estimation and hypothesis testing. They traditionally draw inference with well understood error margins. The dimension of today's datasets however has led to a multiplicity of analyses and tests that are leading to the present new and fundamental challenges to hypothesis testing. If no adjustments are made to account for this multiplicity, the number of false positive results can grow unacceptably large. This is at the heart of the multiple testing problem, which forms the topic of this thesis.

The multiple testing problem has received particular attention in the field of statistical genetics where a huge number of candidate genes may be tested for an association with phenotype, based on relatively small samples. This has led to a whole range of new (ad hoc) statistical developments. These procedures mainly aim to avoid a flood of false positives, i.e. to protect against false findings that put researchers on the wrong track. They thus focus on the null of no association. Unfortunately, by reducing the number of selected genes, one also loses some ability to detect interesting findings. The strategy that is developed in this thesis also quantifies evidence against an important alternative to gain power.

In chapter 1, we introduce the multiple testing problem and a range of error measures through which repeated tests are being evaluated. We present popular procedures designed to control these different error measures.

In chapter 2, we borrow from lessons learned in the field of statistical genetics to confront multiplicity questions in the study of high dimensional Quality of Life (QOL) outcomes. Specifically, we investigate the impact of treatment on symptoms and functionality in several aspects of daily life of breast cancer patients. Unlike classical analysis of QOL-questionnaires, we extend existing techniques to compare treatments in terms of all individual items as they reflect different symptoms that matter to the patients. More in particular, we develop permutation based procedures to detect items of the QOL-questionnaire that differ significantly over observed treatments even in the face of multiple testing.

While in chapter 1 and 2, existing methods are studied and extended, a new powerful methodology to deal with the multiple testing problem is developed from chapter 3 onwards.

To avoid a flood of false positives and to avoid losing too much power, we strive for a better balance between the magnitude of a genetic effect and its precision in chapter 3 and 4. We complement the traditional p-value ( $p_0$ ) with an alternative p-value ( $p_1$ ), a measure of impotence, which summarizes evidence against a target alternative. We build a formal decision criterion by balancing gene-specific type I and type II errors to optimize an expected gain. This criterion turns out to be cast in terms of  $p_0$  and  $p_1$  and leads to an intuitive measure of relative evidence based on which genes are ranked and selected. We call this procedure the balanced test. The technique is applied and developed in the context of statistical selection of genetic markers for plant breeding and for detecting differentially expressed genes in hereditary breast cancer.

In chapter 5, we take this testing procedure one step further and develop two-stage designs for screening genetic markers when the cost of measurements is high. Based on a first sample, a genetic marker is selected if it shows enough evidence against the null and in favor of a specified worthwhile alternative, while a sufficiently convincing lack of effect results in acceptance of the null. Otherwise the genetic marker is situated in a grey zone and more data are gathered at the second stage after which a binary decision is made on all available data. We develop designs and decision rules which optimize an expected gain.

We return to the original multiple testing framework in chapter 6 and study experimentwise properties of our procedure. The balanced test achieves a higher power to detect specified alternatives than methods based on classical p-values. This is a consequence of considering evidence against both the null and alternative hypothesis and handling gene-specific decision criteria. It appears to also provide a more stable solution than standard techniques.

In this thesis, the multiple testing problem is approached in a more specific way to provide a solution for the lack of power of classical tests. The development of new techniques that rethink the ultimate goals of hypothesis testing in a context where many tests are performed is important. This process involves a reflection on existing methods and the recognition of some of their shortcomings when keeping the original (biological) question in mind. Some important steps towards this goal are taken here and smoothen the path for further work on this topic such as the detection of gene-gene interactions.



## 2007 MEMBER LIST

**ADANS Séverine (Mrs)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.31 - Fax: - - Email: sad@math.fundp.ac.be

**AERTS Marc (Pr.)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.47 - Fax: 011-26.82.99 - Email: marc.aerts@uhasselt.be

**ALBERT Adelin (Pr)** Université de Liège Service de Biostatistique CHU Sart Tilman (B35) B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04-366.25.91 - 04-366.25.90 - Fax: 04-366.25.96 - Email: aalbert@ulg.ac.be

**ALMEIDA Carlos (Mr)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.60 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: almeida@stat.ucl.ac.be

**ALONSO ABAD Ariel (Dr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.83 - Fax: 011-26.26.99 - Email: Ariel.Alonso@uhasselt.be

**AMPE Bart (Mr)** Ghent University Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Salisburylaan, 133 B-9820 MERELBEKE (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.73.34 - Fax: 09/264.74.99 - Email: Bart.Ampe@ugent.be

**ANDRIES Ellen (Mrs)** Plantenstraat, 16 B-3500 HASSELT (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**AUGUSTYNS Ilse (Dr)** Janssen Pharmaceutica Turnhoutseweg 30 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.63.38 - Fax: - Email: iaugustij@prdbe.jnj.com

**BAELE Guy (Mr)** Universiteit Gent Department of Applied Maths and Computer Sc. Krijgslaan, 281 - S9 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.49.05 - Fax: 09/264.49.95 - Email: guy.baele@ugent.be

**BANCKEN Fabrice (Dr)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 32-2-352.76.38 - Fax: 32-2-351.26.79 - Email: fabrice.bancken@bms.com

**BARRE Emilie (Mrs)** Bristol Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.35 - Fax: 02/352.78.00 - Email: emilie.barre@bms.com

**BASHIR Saghir (Dr)** V. Baetensstraat, 42 B-1500 HALLE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**BAUDOUX Valérie (Mrs)** UCB Pharma Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.35.57 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: valerie.baudoux@ucb-group.com

**BECK Benoît (Dr)** Lilly Development Centre rue Granbompré, 11 B-1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.64.93 - Fax: 010/47.64.75 - Email: Beck\_benoit@lilly.com

**BEGUIN Claire (Dr)** Avenue Pierre Damien, 9 (boîte 3) B-1150 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**BEIRLANT Jan (Pr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Departement Wiskunde W. de Croylaan, 54 B B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.27.89 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: jan.beirlant@wis.kuleuven.be

**BELLAMAMMER Leïla (Mrs.)** Statistiques et Information Economique Rue de Louvain, 44 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.63 - Fax: 02/548.66.33 - Email: leila.bellamammer@statbel.mineco.fgov.be

**BENNALA Nezar (Mr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles LMTD CP 124 - Avenue Jeanne, 44 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIQUE); Tel: 02/650.34.08 - Fax: 02/650.34.60 - Email: nbennala@ulb.ac.be

**BEUNCKENS Caroline (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.57 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: caroline.beunckens@uhasselt.be

**BIJNENS Luc (Dr.)** Janssen Pharmaceutica Biometrics and Clinical Informatics Turnhoutseweg 30, Box 6356 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.63.56 - Fax: 014/60.58.02 - Email: lbijnens@prdbe.jnj.com

**BILLIET Jaak (Mr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Department Sociology E. Van Evenstraat, 2B B-3001 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.31.57 - Fax: 016.32.33.65 - Email: jaak.Billiet@soc.kuleuven.be

**BODDAERT Michel (Mr.)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-386.35.71 - Fax: 02-386.30.44 - Email: michel.boddaert@ucb-group.com

**BOEHM Hilmar (Mr)** Isestrasse, 67 D-20149 HAMBURG (GERMANY); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**BOEL René (Dr.)** Universiteit Gent Vakgroep Elektrische Energietechniek Technologiepark Zwijnaarde, 9 B-9052 ZWIJNAARDE-GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-264.56.58 - Fax: 09-264.58.40 - Email: rene.Boel@rug.ac.be

**BOGAERTS Jan (Dr)** EORTC Data Center Avenue Mounierlaan, 83/11 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/774.10.63 - Fax: 02/771.38.10 - Email: jbo@eortc.be

**BOGAERTS Kris (Mr.)** Biostatistisch Centrum Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Kapucijnenvoer, 35 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-33.68.90 - Fax: 016-33.70.15 - Email: kris.bogaerts@med.kuleuven.be

**BOLLAERTS Kaatje (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Center for Statistics Campus Diepenbeek, Agoralaan 1, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.52 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: kaatje.bollaerts@uhasselt.be

**BONTEMPI Gianluca (Dr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Institut d'Informatique Bd du Triomphe, CP 212 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.55.91 - Fax: - Email: GBonte@ulb.ac.be

**BOUEZMARNI Taoufik (Dr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Department of psychology Tiensestraat, 102 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.59.85 - Fax: 016/32.59.93 - Email: taoufik.bouezmarni@psy.kuleuven.be

**BOULANGER Bruno (Dr)** ELI LILLY - MSG Rue Granbompré, 11 B-1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.64.68 - 010-47.62.11 - Fax: 010-45.02.90 - Email: BRUNO@LILLY.COM

**BOULTON Muriel (Mrs)** UCB Pharma Sector Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.36.15 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: Muriel.Boulton@UCB-group.com

**BRAAT Sabine (Mrs)** N. V. Organon ADD: Biometrics Monlenstraat, 100 PO BOX 20 NL 5340 BH OSS (THE NETHERLANDS); Tel: (0)412/66.54.62 - Fax: (0)412/66.25.16 - Email: sabine.braat@organon.com

**BRAEKERS Roel (Pr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.34 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: roel.brackers@uhasselt.be

**BRAMATI Maria Caterina (Mrs)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Institut de Statistique CP 210 Boulevard du Triomphe B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.55.26 - Fax: 02/650.58.99 - Email: mbramati@ulb.ac.be

**BRUCKERS Liesbeth (Mrs.)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.15 - Fax: 011-26.82.99 - Email: liesbeth.bruckers@uhasselt.be

**BRUSS Thomas (Pr.)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Institut de Statistique Boulevard du Triomphe CP 210 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-650.58.93, 02-650.58.64, 02-650.58.70 - Fax: 02-650.58.99 - Email: tbruss@ulb.ac.be

**BRYS Guy (Mr)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Leuvenseweg 44 B-1000 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.18 - Fax: - - Email: guy.brys@mineco.fgov.be

**BUGLI Céline (Ir)** UCL - Institut de statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.91.74 010/47.88.65 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: bugli@stat.ucl.ac.be

**BURTIN Bernard (Dr.)** UCB Pharma Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-386.23.05 - Fax: 02-386.24.20 - Email: bernard.burtin@ucb-group.com

**BURZYKOWSKI Tomasz (Dr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.81.73 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: tomasz.burzykowski@uhasselt.be

**BUYSE Marc (Dr)** ID2 Avenue Provinciale 30 B-1340 OTTIGNIES - Louvain-La-Neuve (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-646.89.18 - Fax: 02-646.86.62 - Email: marc.buyse@iddi.com

**CALLAERT Herman (Pr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.43 - Fax: 011-26.82.99 - Email: herman.callaert@uhasselt.be

**CALLENS Marc (Dr)** CBGS Markiesstraat, 1 B-1000 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-553.41.96 - Fax: 02-553.35.57 - Email: marc.callens@wvc.vlaanderen.be

**CARBONEZ An (Dr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor Statistiek W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.22.42 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: an.carbonez@ucs.kuleuven.be

**CARLETTI Georges (Dr)** Rue du Poncia, 23 B-5030 GEMBLOUX (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**CASSART Delphine (Mrs)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Avenue F.D. Roosevelt, 50 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.34.08 - Fax: 02/650.34.66 - Email: delphine.cassart@ulb.ac.be

**CHEUVART Brigitte (Mrs)** Rue des Cortils, 24 B-5101 ERPENT (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**CHRISTMANN Andreas (Pr)** Vrije Universiteit Brussel Faculteit Wetenschappen Pleinlaan, 2 B-1050 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/629.34.76 - Fax: 02/629.34.95 - Email: andreas.christmann@vub.ac.be

**CLAESKENS Gerda (Pr)** Katholiek Universiteit Leuven OR & Business Statistics Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 Leuven (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.69.93 - Fax: 016/32.67.32 - Email: gerda.claeskens@econ.kuleuven.be

**CLAUSTRIAUX Jean-Jacques (Pr)** Faculté Universitaire des Sciences Agronomiques Unité de Statistique, Informatique & Math appliq. Av. de la Faculté d'Agronomie, 8 B-5030 GEMBLOUX (BELGIUM); Tel: 081-62.25.12 - 081-62.24.82 - Fax: 081-61.25.18 - Email: claustriaux.jj@fsagx.ac.be

**CLEMENT Lieven (Mr)** Universiteit Gent Coupure Links, 653 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.59.38 - Fax: 09/264.62.20 - Email: lieven.clement@ugent.be

**COMTE Laetitia (Mrs)** Université de Liège Département de Mathématique 12, Grande Traverse B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.94.60 - Fax: - Email: L.Comte@ulg.ac.be

**COPPENOLLE Hans (Dr)** Janssen Pharmaceutica Turnhoutse weg 30, BOX 108 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.78.89 - Fax: 014/60.58.02 - Email: hcoppeno@prdbe.jnj.com

**CORTINAS ABRAHANTES José (Mr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.15 - 04799-75.15.66 - Fax: - Email: Jose.Cortinas@uhasselt.be

**CREEMERS An (Mrs)** University of Hasselt Center for statistics Agoralaan, gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.94 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: an.creemers@uhasselt.be

**CROUX Christophe (Pr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Faculty of Economics and Applied Economics Naamse straat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.69.58 - Fax: 016/32.67.32 - Email: christophe.croux@econ.kuleuven.be

**DAGNELIE Pierre (Pr)** Chaussée de Charleroi, 177 B-5030 GEMBLOUX (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DANIELSON Linda (Ms.)** rue Marie-Henriette, 66 B-1050 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: Ritter.Danielson@skynet.be

**DANNIAU Anne (Mrs)** avenue des myrtilles, 12 B-1950 KRAAINEM (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DARIUS Paul (Pr)** MEBIOS Kasteelpark Arenberg, 30 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.14.39 - Fax: 016-32.19;94 - Email: Paul.Darius@biw.kuleuven.be

**DAVID Marie-Pierre (Mrs.)** GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals Biologicals Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.94.37 - Fax: 02/656.81.33 - Email: Marie-Pierre.David@gskbio.com

**DAVISTER Cédric (Mr)** rue Haute-Baive, 78 B-5310 LIERNU (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DAWAGNE Jean-Marie (Mr)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Rue de Louvain, 44 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.96 - Fax: 02/548.62.32 - Email: jeanmarie.dawagne@statbel.mineco.fgov.be

**DE BACQUER Dirk (Pr)** Vakgroep Maat. Gezondh. De Pintelaan, 185 Blok A B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-240.36.83 - Fax: 09-240.49.94 - Email: dirk.debacquer@rug.ac.be

**DE BRAUWER Annelies (Mrs)** Innogenetics Technologiepark, 6 B-9052 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/329.17.38 - Fax: 09/329.17.68 - Email: annelies\_de\_brauwert@innogenetics.com

**DE FRENNE Anne (Mrs.)** Société MATH-X Avenue des Tilleuls, 8 B-1180 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-375.34.10 - Fax: 02-375.88.90 - Email: adf@mathx.be

**DE KERCHOVE D' EXAERDE Gérard (Ir)** Chaussée de Jodoigne, 59 B-1390 GREZ-DOICEAU (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DE MAERTELAER Viviane (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles IRIBHM Route de Lennik, 808, CP 602 B-1070 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/555.41.36 - Fax: 02/555.46.55 - Email: vdemaert@ulb.ac.be

**DE MEYER Anna Maria (Dr.)** LUDIT Katholieke Universiteit Leuven de Croylaan, 52a B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.22.15 - Fax: 016/32.29.99 - Email: anne-marie.demeyer@cc.kuleuven.be

**DE PRIL Veerle (Mrs.)** BMS Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.36 - Fax: 02-352.78.00 - Email: deprilv@bms.com

**DE RIDDER Filip (Dr.)** Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R & D Turnhoutseweg, 30 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014-60.39.98 - Fax: 014-60.61.24 - Email: fdridder@prdbe.jnj.com

**DE SMEDT Heidi (Dr)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-386.35.84 - Fax: 02-386.30.44 - Email: heidi.desmedt@ucb-group.com

**DEBRUYNE Michiel (Mr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor Statistiek De Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.22.76 - Fax: - Email: michiel.debruyne@wis.kuleuven.be

**DECLERCK Lieven (Dr.)** S-Clinica Boondaalse Steenweg, 6 B-1050 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/645.05.64 - Fax: 02/645.05.69 - Email: lieven.declerck@s-clinica.com

**DECLERCQ Katrien (Mrs)** SAS Institute Belgium-Luxembourg  
Hertenbergstraat, 6 B-3080 TERVUREN (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/766.07.00 - Fax:  
02/766.07.77 - Email: Katrien.Declercq@sbx.sas.com

**DECUYPER Johan (Mr)** National Bank of Belgium Boulevard de Berlaimont, 14  
B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/221.45.08 - Fax: 02/221.31.34 - Email:  
johan.decuypere@nbb.be

**DEHON Catherine (Dr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Avenue F. D. Roosevelt,  
50 CP 114 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.38.58 - Fax:  
02/650.40.12 - Email: cdehon@ulb.ac.be

**DEJARDIN David (Mr)** Bristol-Myer-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.56 - Fax:  
02/351.26.79 - Email: David.dejardin@bms.com

**DEJONCKHEERE Joachim (Dr)** Oostmeersdreef, 42 B-9800 DEINZE  
(BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DELAIGLE Aurore (Mrs)** University of Bristol Department of Mathematics  
University Walk BS8 1TW BRISTOL (UK); Tel: - - Fax: - - Email:  
Aurore.Delaigle@bristol.ac.uk

**DELBAEN Freddy (Pr.)** ETH-Zürich Departement für Mathematik CH-8092  
ZURICH (SWITZERLAND); Tel: 41-1-632.63.57 - 41-1-632.34.10 - Fax: 41-1-  
632.10.85 - Email: delbaen@math.ethz.ch

**DELINCE Jacques (Dr.)** Unité AGRIFISH, TP266 Centro Commune di Ricerca 2  
via Fermi I-21020 ISPRA (VA) (ITALY); Tel: 39 0 332 78 55 79 - Fax: 39 0 332 78  
51 62 - Email: Jacques.Delince@cec.eu.int

**DELOUILLE Véronique (Mrs)** Observatoire Royal de Belgique Avenue  
Circulaire, 3 B-1180 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/790.39.38 - Fax:  
02/373.02.24 - Email: v.delouille@oma.be

**DELTENRE Alain (Mr)** Colgate-palmolive R&D Inc. Avenue du Parc Industriel  
B-4041 MILMORT (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/278.95.61 - Fax: 04/278.95.75 - Email:  
alain\_deltenre@colpal.com

**DEMEUSE Marc (Dr)** Université de Liège (B32) Service de Pédagogie théorique  
et expérimentale Boulevard du Rectorat, 5 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel:  
04/366.20.95 - Fax: 04/366.28.55 - Email: marc.demeuse@ulg.ac.be

**DENUIT Michel (Pr)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de Louvain Voie  
du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel:  
010/47.28.35 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: denuit@stat.ucl.ac.be

**DEPIEREUX Eric (Pr.)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Biologie Moléculaire Rue de Bruxelles, 61 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: eric.depiereux@fundp.ac.be

**DERDE Marie-Paule (Mrs.)** DICE Koning Albert Avenue, 160 B-1082 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/465.76.50 - Fax: 02/465.76.51 - Email: mp.derde@dice.nu

**DESCHEPPER Ellen (Mrs)** Universiteit Gent Coupure Links, 653 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.59.87 - Fax: 09/264.62.20 - Email: ellen.deschepper@ugent.be

**DESMECHT Laurent (Mr)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.33 - Fax: - - Email: laurent.desmecht@fundp.ac.be

**DESMEDT Frans (Mr)** Le Fèvere de Ten Hovelaan, 12 B-9050 GENTBRUGGE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DESPONTIN Marc (Pr.)** Vrije Universiteit Brussel Centrum Voor Statistiek en Operationeel Onderzoek Pleinlaan, 2 B-1050 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: mpdespon@vub.ac.be

**DEVOS André (Mr)** Oostmolenstraat, 162 B-9880 AALTER (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**DEVROYE Luc (Pr.)** School of Computer Science McGill University 3480 University Street MONTREAL H3A 2K6 (Canada) (CANADA); Tel: 1-514-398.3738 - Fax: 1-514-398.3883 - Email: luc@cs.mcgill.ca

**DEWE Walthère (Mr.)** ELI LILLY - MSG Rue Granbompré, 11 B-1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.64.32 - 0485/54.30.49 - Fax: 010-47.64.75 - Email: w.dewe@lilly.com

**DHAENE Geert (Pr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Centrum voor Economische Studietoën Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.67.98 - Fax: 016/32.67.96 - Email: geert.dhaene@econ.kuleuven.be

**D'HOORE William (Pr)** Université Catholique de Louvain Ecole de Santé Publique Clos Chapelle-aux-champs, 30, bte 3037 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.34.39 - Fax: 02/764.34.35 -Email: dhoore@hosp.ucl.ac.be

**DIERCKX Goedele (Mrs.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor Statistics W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.27.87 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: Goedele.Dierckx@ucs.kuleuven.be

**DONNEAU Anne-Françoise (Mrs)** Université de Liège Informatique médicale et biostatistique CHU, Sart Tilman (B23) B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.47.90 - Fax: 04/366.25.96 - Email: afdonneau@ulg.ac.be



**DONY Julia (Mrs)** Vrije Universiteit Brussel Pleinlaan, 2 B-1050 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/629.34.74 - Fax: 02/629.34.95 - Email: jdony@vub.ac.be

**DOUHA Martine (Mrs)** GLAXO-SMITHKLINE rue de l'institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: - - Fax: - - Email: martine.douha@gskbio.com

**DRAMAIX - WILMET Michele (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Ecole de Santé Publique, Laboratoire Stat. Med. Route de Lennik, 808 B-1070 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/555.40.51 - Fax: 02/555.40.47 - Email: michele.dramaix@ulb.ac.be

**DROESBEKE Jean-Jacques (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles L.M.T.D. Avenue Jeanne, 44 C.P. 124 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.34.38 - Fax: 02/650.34.66 - Email: jjdroesb@ulb.ac.be

**DUBOIS Cécile (Mrs.)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02 - 386 23 37 - Fax: 02 - 386 30 44 - Email: Cecile.Dubois@ucb-group.com

**DUBOIS Cécilia (Mrs)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-386.35.33 - Fax: 02-386.30.44 - Email: Cecilia.Dubois@ucb-group.com

**DUCHATEAU Luc (Dr)** University of Ghent - Faculty of Veterinary Sc. Physiology, Biochemistry & Biometrics Salisburylaan, 133 B-9820 MERELBEKE (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.73.32 - Fax: 09/264.74.99 - Email: luc.duchateau@rug.ac.be

**EDRICH Pascal (Mr)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.30.33 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: pascal.edrich@ucb-group.com

**EINMAHL Uwe (Pr.)** Dept. Wiskunde VUB Pleinlaan, 2 B-1050 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/629.34.89 - Fax: 02/629.34.95 - Email: ueinmahl@vub.ac.be

**EL GHOUGH Anouar (Mr)** UCL Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.65 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: elghouch@stat.ucl.ac.be

**ENGELEN Sanne (Mrs)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor Statistiek W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.21.87 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: sanne.engelen@wis.kuleuven.be

**ESCH Louis (Pr.)** Université de Liège HEC-Ecole de Gestion (Bât N1) Rue Louvrex, 14 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04-232.73.00 - Fax: 04-232.72.40 - Email: Louis.Esch@ulg.ac.be

**FAES Christel (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus  
Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel:  
011/26.81.11 - Fax: 011-26.81.99 - Email: christel.faes@uhasselt.be

**FAUCONNIER Cécile (Mrs)** Université de Liège HEC-Ecole de Gestion (B31)  
Bd du Rectorat, 7 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.46.81 - Fax:  
04/366.28.21 - Email: c.fauconnier@ulg.ac.be

**FORTPIED Catherine (Mrs)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du  
Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.30.29 - Fax:  
02/386.30.44 - Email: catherine.fortpied@ucb-group.com

**FOURNEAU Marc (Mr.)** GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals Manager Biometrics -  
Adults & Internat. Vaccines Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART  
(BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.87.90 - Fax: 02/656.91.32 - Email:  
Marc.Fourneau@gskbio.com

**FRANCIS Stephen (Mr)** Bristol-Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.74 - Fax:  
02/352.78.00 - Email: stephen.francis@bms.com

**FRANCOIS Nancy (Mrs)** UCL - Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20  
B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:  
francois@stat.ucl.ac.be

**FRANK Bernard (Mr)** Avenue Demolder, 100 B-1342 LIMELETTE  
(BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**FRANQUET Ann (Mrs)** SGS Medisearch International Mechelen Noord zone L /  
Intercity Businesspark Generaal De Wittelaan, 19 A bus 5 B-2800 MECHELEN  
(BELGIUM); Tel: 015/40.50.76 - Fax: 015/27.32.50 - Email: ann.franquet@sgs.com

**GARCIA ZATTERA Maria José (Mrs)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven  
Biostatistical Centre, U.Z. Sint-Rafaël Kapucijnenvoer, 35 B-3000 LEUVEN  
(BELGIUM); Tel: 016/33.68.92 - 016/33.68.87 - Fax: 016/33.70.15 - Email:  
MariaJose.GarciaZattera@med.kuleuven.be

**GARROI Jean-Jacques (Mr)** University of Antwerp Prinsstraat, 3 B-2000  
ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/220.43.93 - Fax: 03/220.48.17 - Email: Jean-  
Jacques.Garroi@ua.ac.be

**GENICOT Bruno (Dr)** Avenue des Sarcelles, 25 B-1410 WATERLOO  
(BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**GERARD Paul (Pr.)** Ulg - Institut de Mathématique (Bât B37) Service de  
Statistique Grande Traverse, 12 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04-366.93.84 -  
04-368.85.56 - Fax: 04-366.95.47 - Email: paul.gerard@ulg.ac.be

**GEYS Helena (Dr)** Johnson & Johnson, PRD Turnhoutseweg, 30 B-2340  
BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.67.19 - Fax: - Email: hgeys@prdbc.jnj.com

**GIEZEK Hilde (Mrs)** Merck Sharp & Dhome Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200  
BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - - Fax: - - Email: Hilde\_Giezek@merck.com

**GIJBELS Irène (Pr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor  
Statistiek W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.20.18  
- Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: irene.gijbels@wis.kuleuven.be

**GILLES Leen (Mrs)** Statielei, 129 B-2640 MORTSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax:  
- Email:

**GILLET Marc (Mr.)** GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330  
RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-656.89.75 - Fax: 02-656.64.14 - Email:  
Marc.Gillet@gskbio.com

**GLAVIE Christian (Mr)** National Bank of Belgium Boulevard de Berlaimont, 14  
B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/221.29.37 - Fax: 02/221.31.34 - Email:  
christian.glavie@nbb.be

**GOCHET Willy (Mr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Departement Toegepaste  
Economie Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.69.73 -  
Fax: 016-32.67.32 - Email: willy.gochet@econ.kuleuven.be

**GOEGEBEUR Yuri (Mr.)** University of Southern Denmark Department of  
statistics J.B. Winslows Vej, 9 DK-5000 ODENSE (DENMARK); Tel:  
+45.6550.3360 - Fax: +45.6550.3345 - Email: yuri.goegebeur@stat.sdu.dk

**GOETGELUK Sylvie (Mrs)** Universiteit Gent Krijgslaan, 281 S9 B-9000 GENT  
(BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.48.84 - Fax: 09/264.49.95 - Email:  
sylvie.goetgeluk@ugent.be

**GOETGHEBEUR Els (Pr)** Universiteit Gent TWI Krijgslaan, 281 - S9 B-9000  
GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-264.48.11 - Fax: 09-264.49.95 - Email:  
els.goetghebeur@ugent.be

**GOOS Peter Philiep (Mr)** University of Antwerp Dpt of Mathematics, Statistics &  
Actuarial Science Prinsstraat, 13 B-2000 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel:  
03/220.40.59 - Fax: 03/220.48.17 - Email: Peter.Goos@ua.ac.be

**GOVAERTS Bernadette (Pr.)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de  
Louvain Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM);  
Tel: 010-47.43.13 - 010-47.43.14 - Fax: 010-47.30.32 - Email:  
govaerts@stat.ucl.ac.be

**GOYVAERTS Harry (Mr)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.34 -  
02/352.78.08 - Fax: 02/352.78.00 - Email: harry.goyvaerts@bms.com

**GRATTON Richard (Dr.)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.09 - Fax: 02-351.26.81 - Email: grattonr@bms.com

**HABIMANA Laurence (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Ecole de Santé Publique Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 30 (bte 3058) B-1200 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.33.20 - Fax: 02/764.33.28 - Email: laurence.habimana@epid.ucl.ac.be

**HAESBROECK Gentiane (Pr)** Université de Liège Institut de Mathématique Grande Traverse, 12 (B37) B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.95.94 - Fax: - - Email: g.haesbroeck@ulg.ac.be

**HALLIN Marc (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Institut de Statistique Boulevard du Triomphe CP 210 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.58.86 - 02/650.59.00 - Fax: 02/650.58.99 - Email: mhallin@ulb.ac.be

**HARDY André (Pr.)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Département de mathématique Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.05 - 081/72.49.25 - Fax: 081/72.49.14 - Email: andre.hardy@fundp.ac.be

**HENNICKEN Delphine (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.76.55 - Fax: 02/352.78.00 - Email: delphine.hennicken@bms.com

**HENS Niel (Dr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.32 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: niel.hens@uhasselt.be

**HEUCHENNE Cédric (Mr)** UCL Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.29 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: Heuchenne@stat.ucl.ac.be

**HUBERT Mia (Pr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Department of mathematics W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.20.23 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: mia.hubert@wis.kuleuven.be

**IWEINS Françoise (Mrs)** Sint-Antoniuslaan, 19 B-1950 KRAAINEM (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**JACOBS Tom (Mr.)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.97 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: tom.jacobs@uhasselt.be

**JAMOUL Corinne (Ms.)** UCB Pharma Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: Corinne.Jamoul@UCB-Group.com

**JANSEN Ivy (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus  
Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel:  
011/26.82.33 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: Ivy.jansen@uhasselt.be

**JANSSEN Paul (Pr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus  
Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-  
26.82.36 - Fax: 011-26.82.99 - Email: paul.janssen@uhasselt.be

**JANSSENS Luc (Mr.)** Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D Turnhoutseweg  
30/6787 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.67.87 - Fax: - Email:  
LJansse6@prdbe.jnj.com

**JARA VALLEJOS Alejandro (Mr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Biostatistical  
Centre, U.Z. Sint-Rafaël Kapucijnenvoer, 35 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel:  
016/33.68.92 - 016/33.68.87 - Fax: 016/33.70.15 - Email:  
Alejandro.JaraVallejos@med.kuleuven.ac.be

**JONES John T. (Mr)** UCB Pharma, Inc. Lake Park Drive, 1950 30080  
SMYRNA, GA (USA); Tel: 770.970.8563 - Fax: 770.970.8909 - Email:  
John.Jones@UCB-group.com

**JOOSSENS Kristel (Mrs)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Dept Toegepaste  
Economische Wetenschappen Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM);  
Tel: 016/32.69.29 - Fax: 016/32.67.32 - Email: kristel.joossens@econ.kuleuven.be

**JULLION Astrid (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de Statistique  
Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel:  
010/47.94.01 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: jullion@stat.ucl.ac.be

**JUSTENS Daniel (Dr)** Haute Ecole Ferrer Département Economique Long Place  
Anneessens, 11 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/551.02.09 - Fax:  
02/551.02.25 - Email: daniel.justens@brunette.brucity.be

**KAUFMAN Leonard (Pr.)** Faculteit Geneeskunde Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
Laarbeeklaan, 103 B-1090 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: +32-2-477.4000 -  
Email: leon@minf.vub.ac.be

**KERSELAERS Wendy (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.53 - Fax: -  
Email: kerselaw@bms.com

**KESTEMONT Bruno (Mr.)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Rue de Louvain, 44 B-  
1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.61 - Fax: 02/548.64.78 - Email:  
bkest@ulb.ac.be

**KEY PRATO Maria (Mrs)** UCL Institute of Statistics Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-  
1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.60 - Fax: 010/47.30.32  
- Email: mariakey@stat.ucl.ac.be

**KIRAKOYA Fati (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Ecole de Santé Publique Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 30 B-1200 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.33.20 - Fax: 02/764.33.28 - Email: -

**KNAPEN Koen (Mr)** SAS Institute NV Hertenbergstraat, 6 B-3080 TERVUREN (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/766.07.00 - Fax: 02/766.07.77 - Email: koen.knapen@sbx.sas.com

**KRISTANTO Paulus (Dr.)** Pharmionic Systems Espace Entreprise de Visé Rue des Cyclistes Frontière, 24 B-4600 VISE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/374.86.17 - Fax: 04/374.86.22 - Email: paulus.kristanto@pharmionic.com

**KUBUSHISHI Tite (Dr)** SPF Santé publique, Sécurité de la Ch aliment. Direction générale des Soins de Santé Primaires Eurostation, Place Victor HORTA 40 bte 10 B-1060 BRUXELLES (BELGIQUE); Tel: 02/524 9718 - Fax: 02/524 9814 - Email: tite.kubushishi@health.fgov.be

**LAENEN Annouschka (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.84 - Fax: 011-26.82.99 - Email: Annouschka.Laenen@uhasselt.be

**LAMBERT Alexandre (Dr)** Bristol - Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.90 - Fax: 02/352.78.00 - Email: alexandre.lambert@bms.com

**LAMBERT Philippe (Pr)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 32-10-47.28.01 - Fax: 32-10-47.30.32 - Email: lambert@stat.ucl.ac.be

**LANGE Anne-Catherine (Mrs)** Pharmionic Systems Espace Entreprise de Visé Rue des Cyclistes Frontière, 24 B-4600 VISE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/374.86.36 - Fax: 04/374.86.22 - Email: ac.lange@pharmionic.com

**LAUWERS Marie-Christine (Dr)** Ruiterdreef, 7 B-2970 SCHILDE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**LE BAILLY DE TILLEGHEM Céline (Mrs)** UCL Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.17 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: lebailly@stat.ucl.ac.be

**LEBACQ Marie (Mrs)** SGS Life Science Services Vieux Chemin du Poète B-1300 WAVRE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/42.11.31 - Fax: 010/42.11.06 - Email: Marie.Lebacq@SGS.com

**LEBRUN Luc (Mr)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Rue de Louvain, 44 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.62.64 - Fax: 02/548.62.62 - Email:

**LEBRUN Pierre (Mr)** Université de Liège (B36) Département de Pharmacie (Chimie analytique) Avenue de l'Hôpital, 1 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 0497/75.54.44 - Fax: - - Email: plebrun@ulg.ac.be

**LEDEINE Jean-Marie (Ir.)** 23, rue aux cailloux B-5080 RHISNES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**LEDENT Edouard (Mr)** avenue Alphonse Allard, 112 B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**LEFEVRE Claude (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Institut de Statistique Bd. du Triomphe CP 210 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.58.94 - 02/650.58.98 - Fax: 02/650.58.99 - Email: clefevre@ulb.ac.be

**LEGRAND Catherine (Mrs)** Merck Sharp & Dohme (Europe), Inc Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 WOLUWE (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/776.64.38 - Fax: 02/776.61.86 - Email: catherine\_legrand@merck.com

**LEROY Annick (Dr.)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 b-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.12 - 02-352.77.39 - Fax: 02-352.78.00 - Email: leroya@bms.com

**LESAFFRE Emmanuel (Pr)** Biostatistical Centre UZ - St. Rafael Kapucijnenvoer, 35 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-33.68.96 - 016-33.68.92 - Fax: 016-33.69.00 - Email: emmanuel.lesaffre@med.kuleuven.be

**LIN Dan (Mrs)** University of Hasselt Center for Statistics Agoralaan - Building D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.83 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: dan.lin@luc.ac.be

**LITIERE Saskia (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.82 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: saskia.litiere@uhasselt.be

**LOEYS Tom (Dr.)** Merck Sharp & Dohme (Europe), Inc. Clinical Biostatistics Clos du Lynx 5 B-1200 WOLUWE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: Tom\_Loeyes@merck.com

**LOUCHARD Guy (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Département d'Informatique Campus de la Plaine CP 212, Bld du Triomphe B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.56.13 - Fax: 02/650.56.09 - Email: louchard@ulb.ac.be

**LUCAS Mireille (Mrs.)** Rue des Pavés, 4 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**LUIJTENS Kristel (Mrs.)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.30.30 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: kristel.luijtens@ucb-group.com

**LUMINET Denis (Dr)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Rue de Louvain, 44 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.05 - Fax: 02/548.66.03 - Email: denis.luminet@statbel.mineco.fgov.be

**MAGIS David (Mr)** Université de Liège Institut de Mathématique Grande Traverse, 12 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.94.24 - Fax: 04/366.95.47 - Email: david.magis@ulg.ac.be

**MALBECQ William (Dr)** Merck Sharp & Dohme Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-776.64.47 - Fax: 02-776.62.96 - Email: william\_malbecq@merck.com

**MALICE Marie-Pierre (Dr.)** Merck Sharp & Dohme Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-776.64.46 - 02-776.64.43 - Fax: 02-776.62.96 - Email: mariepierre\_malice@merck.com

**MARCHAL Jean-Louis (Dr)** Elisabeth Willemslaan, 9 B-3150 WESPELAAR (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**MARINGWA John T. (Mr)** Universiteit Hasselt Universitaire Campus, Gebow D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.85 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: john.maringwa@uhasselt.be

**MASSAAD Rachid (Mr)** Merck Sharp & Dohme Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/776.60.56 - Fax: 02/776.62.96 - Email: rachid\_massaad@merck.com

**MASSONNET Goele (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.44 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: goele.massonnet@uhasselt.be

**MATTIACCI Maria-Rosa (Mrs.)** Av. de Boetendal, 9 B-1180 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**MAUER Murielle (Dr)** EORTC Data Center Avenue E. Mounier, 83/11 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/774.10.06 - Fax: - Email: murielle.mauer@EORTC.BE

**MENTEN Joris (Mr)** Willem de Croylaan, 49/22 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**MEYVISCH Paul (Mr)** UCB Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.25.86 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: paul.meyvisch@ucb-group.com

**MICHIELS Bart (Mr.)** Janssen Pharmaceutica Turnhoutseweg, 30 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.20.08 - Fax: - Email: bmichiel@prdbe.jnj.com



**MOERKERKE Beatrijs (Mrs)** Ghent University Dept of Applied Mathematics and Computer Science Krijgslaan, 281/S9 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.47.56 - Fax: 09/264.49.95 - Email: Beatrijs.Moerkerke@UGent.be

**MOLENBERGHS Geert (Pr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011-26.82.38 - 011-26.82.02 - Fax: 011.26.82.99 - Email: geert.molenberghs@uhasselt.be

**MOORE Roger (Mr)** Eli Lilly & Co Ltd Lilly Research Centre Erl Wood Manor, Windlesham GU20 6PH SURREY (ENGLAND); Tel: +44/1276.48.35.19 - Fax: +44/1276.48.48.00 - Email: moore\_roger@lilly.com

**MOTTA Giovanni (Mr)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.56 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: motta@stat.ucl.ac.be

**MOUCHART Michel (Pr.)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de Louvain Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.43.18 - secr: 010-47.43.14 - Fax: 010-47.30.32 - Email: mouchart@stat.ucl.ac.be

**MUNIER Stéphane (Mr.)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.78.61 - Fax: - Email: muniers@bms.com

**NEUTS Marcel (Pr.)** 925 N. Smoke Tree Circle - Tucson, AZ 85745 U.S.A. (USA); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**NEVEU Jacques (Pr.)** square Lagarde, 4 F-75005 PARIS (FRANCE); Tel: 33 1 43 36 18 67 - Fax: - Email:

**NOIRHOMME-FRAITURE Monique (Pr.)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Institut d'Informatique Rue Grandgagnage, 21 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.79 - Fax: 081/72.49.67 - Email: monique.noirhomme@info.fundp.ac.be

**NOIROUX Laurence (Mrs)** S-Clinica Chaussée de Boondael, 6 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIQUE); Tel: 02/645.05.63 - Fax: 02/645.05.69 - Email: laurence.noiroux@s-clinica.com

**NOZAY Florence (Mrs)** Glaxosmithkline Biologicals Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.79.22 - Fax: 02/656.81.13 - Email: florence.nozay@gskbio.com

**NTWA Jean-Pierre (Mr)** Statistics Belgium (NIS/INS) Rue de Louvain, 44 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.68.54 - Fax: 02/548.62.32 - Email: jeanpierre.ntwa@statbel.mineco.fgov.be

**NYS Marleen (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.78.17 - Fax: - Email: marleen.nys@bms.com

**OMEY Edward (Dr)** EHSAL Stormstraat, 2 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/210.12.11 - Fax: 02/217.64.64 - Email: edward.omey@ehsal.be

**ONGHENA Patrick (Pr)** Departement Pedagogische Wetenschappen Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Vesaliusstraat, 2 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.59.54 - 016-32.62.01 - Fax: 016-32.59.34 - Email: patrick.onghena@ped.kuleuven.be

**OTOUL Christian (IR)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.25.04 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: christian.otoul@ucb-group.com

**OTTOY Jean-Pierre (Pr)** University of Ghent Coupure Links, 653 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.59.34 - 09/264.59.40 - Fax: 09/264.62.20 - Email: JeanPierre.Ottoy@rug.ac.be

**PAGE Hilary (Pr.)** Vakgr. Bevolkingswet en Soc. wet. Method. Universiteit Gent Korte Meer, 3 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-264.91.62 - Fax: 09-264.91.98 - Email: hilary.page@rug.ac.be

**PAINDAVEINE Davy (Pr)** Université de Bruxelles Campus de la Plaine, CP 210 Boulevard du Triomphe B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.58.92 - Fax: 02/650.58.99 - Email: dpaindav@ulb.ac.be

**PALM Rudy (Pr)** Unité de Statistique et Informatique Faculté universitaire des Sciences Agronomiques Av. de la Faculté d'Agronomie, 8 B-5030 GEMBLOUX (BELGIUM); Tel: 081-62.25.12 - Fax: 081-61.25.18 - Email: statinfo@fsagx.ac.be

**PANS Miranda (Mrs.)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.40 - Fax: 02-351.39.75 - Email: pansm@bms.com

**PARIS José (Pr.)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de Louvain Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.42.81 - 010-47.43.14 - Fax: 010-47.30.32 - Email: issec@stat.ucl.ac.be

**PAUTRET Virginie (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.77.42 - Fax: 02/352.78.00 - Email: virginie.pautret@bms.com

**PEETERS Monika (Dr)** TIBOTEC-VIRCO Gen de Wittelaan, L11, B4 B-2800 MECHELEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 0478/34.17.17 - Fax: 015/28.63.46 - Email: MONIKA.peeters@vircolab.com

**PIETERS Anne (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.27 - Fax: 02-351.26.79 - Email: Anne.Pieters@bms.com

**PLANCHON Viviane (Mrs.)** Centre wallon de Recherches Agronomiques Biométrie - gestion des données & agrométéorologie Rue de Liroux, 9 B-5030 GEMBLOUX (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/62.65.71 - Fax: 081/62.65.59 - Email: planchon@cra.wallonie.be

**POULART Valérie (Mrs)** Bristol - Myers Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.76.85 - Fax: - Email: valerie.poulart@bms.com

**POULLET Ghislain (Mr)** Banque Nationale de Belgique Boulevard de Berlaymont, 3 B-1000 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/221.24.27 - Fax: 02/221.32.30 - Email: ghislain.poulet@nbb.be

**POVEY Michael (Mr)** SGS Biopharma Vieux Chemin du Poete, 10 B-1300 WAVRE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/43.79.74 - Fax: 010/40.20.18 - Email: Michael\_John\_Povey@sgs.com

**PURCARU Oana (Dr)** Place Saint Antoine, 5, BP 3 B-1040 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**QUATAERT Paul (Ir)** Stropkaai, 51 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**QUINAUX Emmanuel (Mr.)** IDDI Avenue Provinciale, 30 B-1340 OTTIGNIES (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/62.15.78 - Fax: 010/61.88.88 - Email: emmanuel.quinaux@iddi.com

**RASSON Jean-Paul (Pr.)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Département de mathématique Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.28 - 081/72.49.29 - Fax: 081/72.49.14 - Email: jpr@math.fundp.ac.be

**REMICHE Marie-Ange (Dr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles SMG - CP 210/01 Bld du Triomphe B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.29.15 - Fax: - Email: mremiche@ulb.ac.be

**REMON Marcel (Pr.)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Département de mathématique Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.30 - Fax: 081/72.49.14 - Email: marcel.remon@fundp.ac.be

**RENARD Didier (Dr.)** ELI LILLY Rue Granbompré, 11 B-1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: +32 10 477006 - Fax: +32 10 476475 - Email: RENARD\_DIDIER@Lilly.com

**REY William (Dr.)** Rue Fontaine des Gattes, 31 1470 Bousval (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**RIJMEN Frank (Mr)** KULeuven Departement Psychologie Tiensestraat, 102 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.59.88 - Fax: 016/32.59.16 - Email: frank.rijmen@psy.kuleuven.be

**RITTER Christian (Dr.)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de Louvain Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.34.79 - Fax: 010-47.43.01 - Email: ritter@stat.ucl.ac.be

**ROBERT Annie (Pr)** UCL- Ecole de santé publique - Unité d'Epidémiologie Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 30 boîte 30.34 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.33.21 - 02/764.30.27 - Fax: 02/764.33.28 - Email: robert@card.ucl.ac.be

**ROELANT Ella (Mrs)** Universiteit Gent Krijgslaan, 281, S9 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.47.56 - Fax: 09/264.49.95 - Email: Ella.Roelant@ugent.be

**ROLAND François (Mr)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.29 - Fax: 081/72.49.14 - Email: frol@math.fundp.ac.be

**ROLIN Jean-Marie (Pr.)** Institut de Statistique Université Catholique de Louvain Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.43.33 - 010-47.43.14 - Fax: 010-47.30.32 - Email: rolin@stat.ucl.ac.be

**ROSILLON Dominique (Dr.)** UCB SA Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.63.70 - Fax: - Email: Dominique.rosillon@ucb-group.com

**ROUSSEAU Réjane (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.60 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: rousseau@stat.ucl.ac.be

**ROUSSEEUW Peter (Pr.)** University of Antwerp Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Middelheimlaan, 1 B-2020 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/265.39.05 - Fax: 03/265.37.77 - Email: peter.rousseeuw@ua.ac.be

**RUSCH Sarah (Mrs)** Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D Biometrics and Clinical Informatics Turnhoutseweg, 30 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.35.95 - Fax: 014/60.58.02 - Email: srusch@prdbe.jnj.com

**SANCINITO SPITO Laurent (Mr)** Facultés Univ. Notre-Dame de la Paix Rempart de la Vierge, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/72.49.33 - Fax: 081/72.49.14 - Email: laurent.sancinito@fundp.ac.be

**SAWCHIK Javier (Dr)** UCB Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.25.16 - Fax: 02/386.35.58 - Email: javier.sawchik@UCB-group.com

**SCHOUTENS Wim (Dr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Universitair Centrum voor Statistiek W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.20.27 - Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: Wim.Schoutens@wis.kuleuven.be

**SCHUYTEN Gilberte (Pr.)** Ghent University Head Department Data Analysis Henri Dunantlaan, 1 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-264.63.86 - Fax: 09-264.64.87 - Email: gilberte.schuyten@ugent.be

**SEIDEL Laurence (Mrs.)** Université de Liège Biostatistique CHU Sart Tilman, B35 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.25.95 - Fax: 04/366.25.96 - Email: laurence.seidel@ulg.ac.be

**SERROYEN Jan (Mr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.88 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: Jan.Serroyen@uhasselt.be

**SHKEDY Ziv (Mr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.57 - Fax: - Email: ziv.shkedy@uhasselt.be

**SIMAR Léopold (Pr.)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.43.08 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: simar@stat.ucl.ac.be

**SLOCK Peter (Mr)** Rijksdienst Voor Pensioenen TOUR DU MIDI B-1060 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: peter.slock@onp.fgov.be

**SMIT Jan (Mr)** Cosinus Computing BV Consultancy in Statistics and Numerics Grotestraat, 401a 5142 CB WAALWIJK (THE NETHERLANDS); Tel: +(31) 416 378 125 - Fax: +(31) 416 378 385 - Email: jan.smit@cosinus.nl

**SPIESSENS Bart (Dr)** GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.76.83 - Fax: 02/656.80.33 - Email: bart.spiessens@gskbio.com

**STRAETEMANS Roel (Dr)** Janssen pharmaceutica Turnhoutseweg, 30 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/602744 - Fax: - Email: rstraete@prdbe.jnj.com

**STRUYF Anja (Mrs.)** University of Antwerp Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Middelheimlaan, 1 B-2020 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/265.38.87 - Fax: 03/265.37.77 - Email: anja.struyf@ua.ac.be

**STURBOIS Xavier (Pr)** UCL - IEPR place Pierre de Coubertin, 1 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.44.42 - 010/47.46.89 - Fax: 010/47.20.93 - Email: xavier.sturbois@edph.ucl.ac.be

**SWAN Yvik (Mr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Campus de la Plaine, CP210 Blvd du Triomphe B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.58.82 - Fax: - Email: yvswan@ulb.ac.be

**SWANINK René (Mr)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**SWYNGEDOUW Marc (Pr)** Departement Sociologie Katholieke Universiteit  
Leuven E. van Evenstraat, 2B B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.31.59 -  
Fax: 016-32.33.65 - Email: marc.swyngedouw@soc.kuleuven.be

**TEODORESCU Bianca (Mrs)** UCL Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays,  
20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.28 - Fax:  
010/47.30.32 - Email: teodorescu@stat.ucl.ac.be

**TEUGELS Jozef (Pr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven University Center for  
Statistics W. de Croylaan, 54 B-3001 HEVERLEE (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.27.86  
- Fax: 016/32.28.31 - Email: jef.teugels@wis.kuleuven.be

**THAS Olivier (Pr)** Universiteit Gent Coupure Links, 653 B-9000 GENT  
(BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.59.33 - Fax: 09/264.62.20 - Email: olivier.thas@ugent.be

**THIJS Herbert (Dr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus  
Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel:  
011/26.82.28 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: herbert.thijs@uhasselt.be

**TIBALDI Fabian (Dr)** Eli Lilly Parc Scientifique LLN Rue Granbompre 11 B-  
1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: +32 10 477 077 - Fax: +32 10  
476 475 - Email: TIBALDI\_FABIAN\_SANTIAGO@LILLY.COM

**TILLE Yves (Pr)** Université de Neuchâtel Chaire de Statistique appliquée Espace  
de l'Europe, 4 - CP 827 CH 2002 NEUCHATEL (SWITZERLAND); Tel: 41 32 718  
14 75 - Fax: 41 32 718 13 81 - Email: yves.tille@unine.ch

**TISTAERT Jurgen (Mr)** Bank Brussels Lambert (BBL) Risk Management  
Department Avenue Marnix, 24 B-1000 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-  
547.81.31 - 02-452.85.93 - Fax: 02-547.86.80 - Email: Jurgen.Tistaert@bbl.be

**T'JOEN Caroline (Mrs)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/352.76.93 - Fax: -  
Email: caroline.tjoen@bms.com

**TORBAYNS Anne (Dr.)** Bristol-Myers-Squibb Parc de l'Alliance Avenue de  
Finlande, 8 B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-352.77.22 - 065-  
31.18.32 - Fax: 02-351.26.79 - Email: torbeyna@bms.com

**TOUSSET Eric (Mr)** Pharnionic Systems Espace Entreprise de Visé Rue des  
Cyclistes Frontière, 24 B-4600 VISE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/374.86.34 - Fax:  
04/374.86.22 - Email: eric.tousset@pharnionic.com

**VAES Evelien (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Public Health School Clos Chapelle aux Champs, 30-58 B-1200 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.33.37 - Fax: 02/764.33.28 - Email: evelien.vaes@epid.ucl.ac.be

**VALENTE SOARES Filomena (Mrs)** Université Libre de Bruxelles Ecole de Santé Publique Route de Lennik, 808 B-1070 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/555.40.50 - Fax: 02/555.40.47 - Email: filomena.valente@ulb.ac.be

**VALKENBORG Dirk (Mr)** Universiteit Hasselt Center for Statistics Agoralaan, building D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.92 - Fax: - Email: dirk.valkenborg@uhasselt.be

**VAN AELST Stefan (Mr.)** Ghent University Applied Maths and Computing Krijgslaan 281 S9 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09-2644908 - Fax: 09-2644995 - Email: stefan.vanaelst@rug.ac.be

**VAN BELLE Pascale (Mrs.)** GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals Rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.82.40 - Fax: 02/656.80.33 - Email: Pascale.Van-Belle@gskbio.com

**VAN BELLEGEM Sébastien (Pr)** UCL Institute of Statistics Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.86.49 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: vanbellegem@stat.ucl.ac.be

**VAN DEN POEL Dirk (Pr)** Ghent University Hoveniersberg, 24 9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.89.80 - Fax: 09/264.42.79 - Email: dirk.vandenpoel@rug.ac.be

**VAN KEILEGOM Ingrid (Dr)** Université Catholique de Louvain Institut de statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.43.30 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: vankeilegom@stat.ucl.ac.be

**VAN KERCKHOVEN Johan (Mr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.69.61 - Fax: - Email: johan.vankerckhoven@econ.kuleuven.be

**VAN MECHELEN Iven (Pr)** KU Leuven Departement Psychologie Tiensestraat, 102 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.61.31 - Fax: 016/32.60.00 - Email: Iven.vanmechelen@psy.kuleuven.be

**VAN OUYTSEL Alexander (Mr)** rue de la Brise, 23 B-1400 NIVELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VAN OYEN Herman (Pr.)** IPH - Scientific Institute of Public Health Unit of Epidemiology J. Wytsmanstraat, 14 B-1050 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-642.50.29 - 02/642.50.37 - Fax: 02-642.54.10 - Email: herman.vanoyen@iph.fgov.be

**VAN SANDEN Suzy (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.81 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: susy.vansanden@uhasselt.be

**VAN STEEN Kristel (Dr)** Krijgsbaan 147 D B-9140 TEMSE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VAN WILDER Philippe (Mr.)** Gebroeders Paters Abelooslaan, 20 B-1933 STERREBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VANBELLE Sophie (Mrs)** Université de Liège Informatique médicale et biostatistique CHU, Sart Tilman (B23) B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIUM); Tel: 04/366.47.90 - Fax: 04/366.25.96 - Email: Sophie.Vanbelle@ulg.ac.be

**VANDEBOSCH An (Mrs)** Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical R&D Turnhoutseweg, 30/5083 B-2340 BEERSE (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/60.50.83 - Fax: 014/60.58.02 - Email: avandebo@prdbe.jnj.com

**VANDEBROEK Martina (Pr.)** ORSTAT Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016-32.69.75 - Fax: 016-32.67.32 - Email: martina.vandebroek@econ.kuleuven.be

**VANDENHENDE François (Mr.)** RIS ELI LILLY- MSG Rue Granbompré, 11 B-1348 MONT-SAINT-GUIBERT (BELGIUM); Tel: 010-47.64.69 - Fax: 010-45.02.90 - Email: francois@LILLY.com

**VANDENHOOFT Annick (Mrs)** Université Catholique de Louvain Public Health School Clos Chapelle-aux-Champs, 30.58 B-1200 BRUSSELS (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/764.33.37 - Fax: 02/764.33.28 - Email: Annick.Vandenhooft@epid.ucl.ac.be

**VANDERHOEFT Camille (Dr.)** NIS Leuvenseweg, 44 B-1000 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/548.66.44 - Fax: 02-548.66.90 - Email: camille.vanderhoeft@statbel.fgov.be

**VANDERSMISSEN Veerle (Mrs)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.81 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: veerle.vandersmissen@uhasselt.be

**VANDERVELDEN Cécile (Mrs)** Rue Saint-Martin, 1 B-5670 LE MESNIL-VIROINVAL (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VANDERVIEREN Ellen (Mrs)** University of Antwerp Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Middelheimlaan, 1 B-2020 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/265.38.59 - Fax: 03/265.37.77 - Email: ellen.vandervieren@ua.ac.be

**VANDEWALLE Björn (Mr)** Emiel Jacqueslaan, 19 B-8890 MOORSLEDE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:



**VANDORMAEL Kristel (Mrs.)** Merck Sharp & Dohme Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02-776.64.80 - Fax: 02-776.62.96 - Email: vandorma@merck.com

**VANGENEUGDEN Tony (Mr.)** Bijenberg, 7 B-3690 ZUTENDAAL (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VANSTEELANDT Stijn (Mr)** University of Ghent Department of Applied Mathematics and computer sc. Krijgslaan, 281-S9 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.47.76 - 09/232.11.91 - Fax: 09/264.49.95 - Email: stijn.vansteelandt@ugent.be

**VANVEGGEL Simon (Mr)** Lange Koepoortstraat, 24 bus 11 B-2000 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**VERAVERBEKE Noël (Pr)** Universiteit Hasselt Centrum voor Statistiek Campus Diepenbeek Agoralaan, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.82.37 - Fax: 011/26.82.99 - Email: noel.veraverbeke@uhasselt.be

**VERBEKE Geert (Pr.)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Biostatistisch Centrum Capucijnenvoer, 35 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/33.68.91 - 016/33.68.92 - Fax: 016/33.69.00 - Email: geert.verbeke@med.kuleuven.be

**VERBOVEN Sabine (Mrs)** University of Antwerp Dept. of Mathematics, Statistics & Actuarial Sc. Prinsstraat, 13 B-2000 Antwerpen (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/220.42.19 - Fax: 03/220.48.17 - Email: sabine.verboven@ua.ac.be

**VERBRUGGEN Nadia (Mrs.)** Merck Sharp & Dohme CBARDS Clos du Lynx, 5 B-1200 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/776.65.24 - Fax: 02/776.62.96 - Email: nadia\_verbruggen@merck.com

**VERDONCK Tim (Mr)** Universiteit Antwerpen Middelheimlaan, 1 B-2020 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/265.38.96 - Fax: 03/265.37.77 - Email: tim.verdonck@ua.ac.be

**VEREDAS David (Dr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles ECARES - CP114 Avenue FD Roosevelt, 50 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.42.18 - Fax: 02/650.44.75 - Email: dveredas@ulb.ac.be

**VERLAAK Robert (Mr)** AON RE BELGIUM Van Neuwenhuiselaan, 2 B-1160 BRUSSEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/675.05.06 - Fax: 02/672.67.06 - Email: robert\_verlaak@aon.be

**VERMANDELE Catherine (Pr)** Université Libre de Bruxelles LMTD CP 124 - Avenue Jeanne, 44 B-1050 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/650.46.55 - Fax: 02/650.34.66 - Email: vermande@ulb.ac.be

**VERMEIRE Lea (Pr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Campus Kortrijk Sabbelaan, 53 B-8500 KORTRIJK (BELGIUM); Tel: 056-24.61.32 - 056-24.61.11 - Fax: 056-24.69.99 - Email: lea.vermeire@kuleuven-kortrijk.be

**VERMEULEN Bart (Mr)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Faculty of Economics and Applied Economics Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.68.98 - Fax: 016/32.67.32 - Email: bart.vermeulen@econ.kuleuven.be

**VERSTREKEN Liesbeth (Mrs)** UCB Pharma R&D R8 - Biostatistics Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.31.86 - Fax: 02/386.30.44 - Email: liesbeth.verstreken@ucb-group.com

**VON FRENCKELL Rémy (Dr.)** UCB Pharma R&D Chemin du Foriest B-1420 BRAINE-L'ALLEUD (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/386.28.29 - Fax: 02/386.31.97 - Email: remy.vonfrenckell@ucb-group.com

**VON SACHS Rainer (Pr)** UCL Institut de Statistique Voie du Roman Pays, 20 B-1348 LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE (BELGIUM); Tel: 010/47.88.06 - Fax: 010/47.30.32 - Email: rvs@stat.ucl.ac.be

**VRIJENS Bernard (Dr.)** Pharmionic systems Espace Entreprise de Visé Rue des Cyclistes Frontière, 24 B-4600 VISE (BELGIUM); Tel: +32 4 374 86 35 - Fax: +32 4 374 86 22 - Email: bernard.vrijens@pharmionic.com

**VRIJENS France (Mrs)** Centre Fédéral d'Expertise des Soins de Santé Residence Palace (10 ieme etage) Rue de la Loi, 155 B-1040 BRUXELLES (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email: fvrijens@all2all.org

**WAUTERS Magdalena (Pr)** op de dries, 4 B-3770 RIEMST (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**WERKER Bas (Mr)** Finance group Tilburg University P.O. Box 90153 NL 5000 LE TILBURG (THE NETHERLANDS); Tel: - Fax: - Email: Werker@kub.nl

**WEVERBERGH Dany (Mr.)** MET D432 Cartographie et topographie Bd du Nord, 8 B-5000 NAMUR (BELGIUM); Tel: 081/77.33.85 - Fax: 081/77.38.88 - Email: dweverbergh@met.wallonie.be

**WILLEMS Gert (Mr)** University of Antwerp Department of Mathematics and Computer Science Middelheimlaan, 1 B-2020 ANTWERPEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 03/265.38.96 - Fax: 03/265.37.77 - Email: Gert.Willems@ua.ac.be

**WOUTERS Heidi (Mrs)** Universiteit Gent Coupure links, 653 B-9000 GENT (BELGIUM); Tel: 09/264.59.87 - Fax: 09/264.62.20 - Email: heidi.wouters@ugent.be

**WOUTERS Kristien (Mrs)** University of Hasselt Universitaire Campus, Gebouw D B-3590 DIEPENBEEK (BELGIUM); Tel: 011/26.81.11 - Fax: 011/26.81.99 - Email: kristien.wouters@uhasselt.be

**WOUTERS Luc (Mr)** Barrier Therapeutics NV Ciplastraat 3 B-2440 GEEL (BELGIUM); Tel: 014/570.510 - Fax: 014/570.515 - Email: lwouters@barriertherapeutics.be

**YSEBAERT Maria (Pr.)** Axelwalle, 31 B-9700 OUDENAARDE (BELGIUM); Tel: - Fax: - Email:

**YU Jie (Mrs)** Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Faculty of Economics and Applied Economics Naamsestraat, 69 B-3000 LEUVEN (BELGIUM); Tel: 016/32.68.97 - Fax: 016/32.67.32 - Email: Jie.yu@econ.kuleuven.be

**ZAHAF Toufik (Mr)** Glaxo SmithKline Bio rue de l'Institut, 89 B-1330 RIXENSART (BELGIUM); Tel: 02/656.92.56 - Fax: 02/656.80.33 - Email: zahaf.toufik@gskbio.com

**ZHANG Lixin (Mrs)** Université de Liège Biostatistique CHU, Sart Tilman, B23 B-4000 LIEGE (BELGIQUE); Tel: 04/366.25.95 - Fax: 04/366.25.96 - Email: Lixin.zhang@ulg.ac.be

Next issue:  
Results of the survey about B-Stat News.

We would like to publish in this *Newsletter* any statistical matter such as :

- information about universities, institutes (1 to 3 pages);
- lists of recent publications and technical reports;
- abstracts of recent PhD theses;
- news of members;
- forthcoming statistical events and announcements;
- short papers about teaching methods in statistics, statistics in the industry, official statistics, etc.

Suggestions are welcome: please, contact us.

Suitable information for the next issue, prepared as **(LA)TEX or WORD FILES**, should reach the editors of the Newsletter **BEFORE March 15, 2007**, preferable by e-mail to:

sophie.vanbelle@ulg.ac.be  
olivier.thas@ugent.be

### **Any change of job, address, phone number, ... ?**

Please notify the Secretary of the Society:

Gentiane Haesbroeck:  
Université de Liège  
Institut de mathématique  
Sart Tilman B37  
B-4000 Liège  
g.haesbroeck@ulg.ac.be