

**Mitochondrial membrane remodelling by Bcl-2 family members to control apoptosis**

Jean-Claude Martinou

*Département de Biologie Cellulaire – Université de Genève*

During apoptosis, Bax, a member of the Bcl-2 family, pores the outer mitochondrial membrane by a mechanism that is still unclear. This process allows the release of cytochrome c, which is normally confined in the intermembrane space of the organelle, into the cytosol where it participates in the activation of caspases (proteases that execute the cell). Bax achieves this function as an oligomer. Our group recently found that membrane hemifusion/hemifission intermediates can promote Bax oligomerization. Such membrane structures are likely to form at sites of mitochondrial fusion or fission. We would like to understand how this membrane remodelling can promote Bax oligomerization and whether it plays a role in the permeabilization of the outer mitochondrial membrane.