

In March 2008, the nationwide virtual tumourbank project was launched by the Belgian Minister of Health, Ms. Laurette Onkelinx (initiative 27 of the Belgian Cancer Plan). The Belgian Virtual Tumourbank (BVT network) encompasses the tumour biobanks from eleven Belgian university hospitals ([click here](#) for the list) that collect and store residual human tumour samples locally. In order to facilitate the search for tumour samples scattered among different Belgian institutions, data collected at sample level is made available for researchers via the online BVT catalogue (BVTc) application. A high quality of the data on the tumour samples requested by scientists for research in oncology is guaranteed by automatic and manual controls performed by the BVT project team at the Belgian Cancer Registry.

DO WE HAVE WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR?

With this second newsletter, we give you a quick glance of the available samples in our online BVT catalogue! If you want to know if the specific samples for your research are available in our catalogue, please request full access so you can browse freely through all available sample data and find the matching samples for your study!

AVAILABLE SAMPLES

The BVT catalogue contains patient, medical and technical data, but excludes identifying information to ensure privacy of individuals (for full dataset, [click here](#)). On November 1st 2017, a total of 77,028 registrations were available in the BVTc, including 65,475 primary tumour samples and 9,155 metastasis samples. For biannually updated aggregated data, [click here](#).

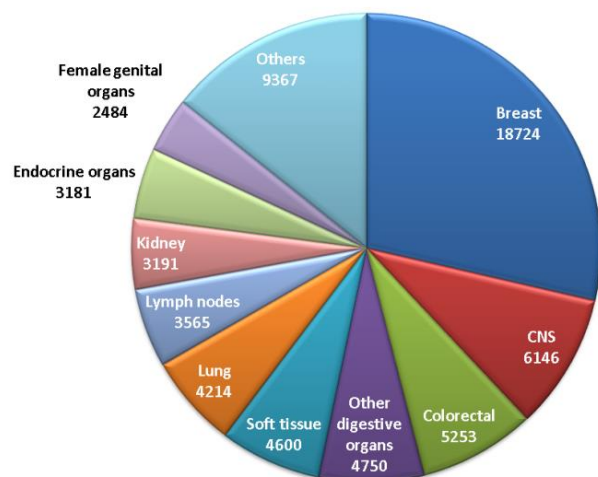
More than 18,000 breast tumour samples !

About 5000 samples from tumours in:

- Central nervous system
- Colorectal
- Other digestive organs (stomach, liver, pancreas, ...)

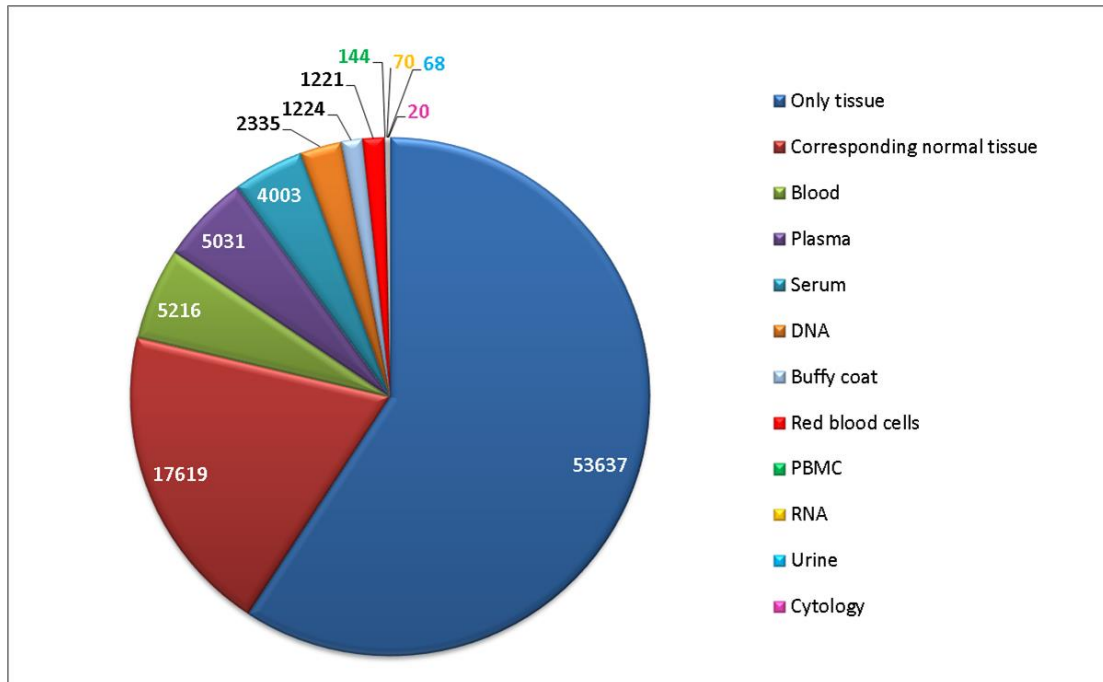
Also less frequent tumours are available (group "others" on the figure):

- Head and neck
- Skin
- Bone marrow and spleen
- Male genital organs
- Other intrathoracic organs
- Bone and articular cartilage
- Urinary tract

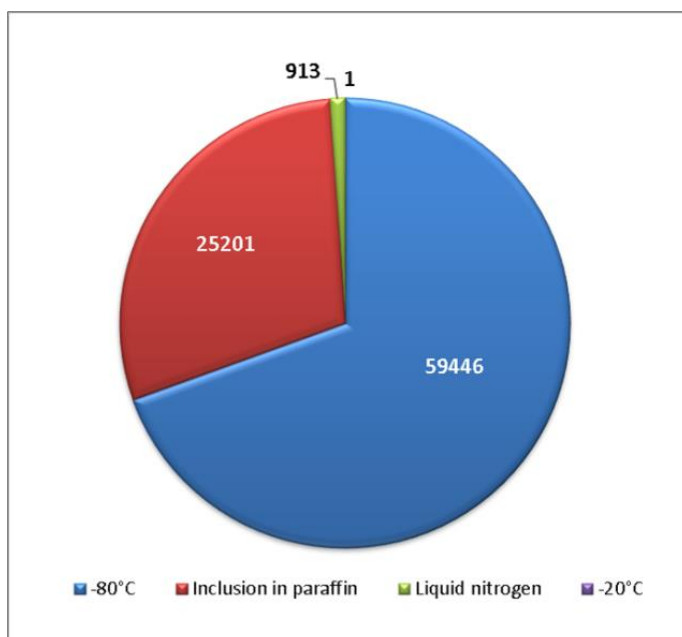


WHICH MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE?

For 53,637 (60 %) registrations only tumour tissue samples are available. However, also other residual materials can be stored at the local biobank and thus be available in the BVT catalogue. The most common type of other residual material is corresponding normal tissue samples (20 %). Other available materials are plasma, blood, serum, DNA and buffy coat. Even PBMCs, RNA, cytology and urine are available in some cases!



HOW ARE THE SAMPLES STORED?



The majority of the tumour samples (69%) are conserved at -80°C.

More than one fourth (29%) of the tumour samples are included in paraffin.

WHAT ABOUT GENDER?

In the BVT catalogue, 45,387 (58,9%) residual tumour samples origin from female patients and 31,641 (41,1%) from male patients. The most common localisations of primary tumour samples of female patients are breast, CNS, female genital organs and colorectal. As far as male cancer patients are concerned, most common topology groups of residual primary tumour samples are CNS, colorectal, lung, other digestive organs (such as stomach, liver, pancreas, ...) and soft tissue.



Topology groups: top 10 + other	Number of registrations
CNS	3226
Colorectal	2901
Other digestive organs	2858
Lung	2841
Soft tissue	2482
Lymph nodes	2133
Kidney	2092
Head and neck	1600
Endocrine organs	1131
Male genital organs	1076
Others	3769
- Of which prostate	618
Grand Total	26109

Topology groups: top 10 + other	Number of registrations
Breast	18469
CNS	2920
Female genital organs	2484
Colorectal	2352
Soft tissue	2118
Endocrine organs	2050
Other digestive organs	1892
Lymph nodes	1432
Lung	1373
Kidney	1099
Others	3177
Grand Total	39366

The blue marked organs in the figure above are the top three most frequent tumour localisations for primary tumours in Belgium: prostate, lung and colorectal for male patients and breast, colorectal and lung for female patients.

For information on sample availability, [click here](#).

To gain full access to the online BVT catalogue, please follow the procedure indicated [here](#).

For further information: www.virtualltumourbank.be
biobank@kankerregister.org or biobank@registreducancer.org

Do you wish to be kept informed in the future? Click [here](#).
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