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After becoming an internist in 1985, I was trained in clinical Pharmacology at Maastricht University in The Netherlands. Very soon I was introduced in arterial stiffness research, using the echo-tracking technique which was recently developed by Hoeks and coworkers in Maastricht. Very soon an intensive collaboration between the departments of Physiology, Pharmacology and Biophysics of Maastricht University and Michel Safar's department in Paris was established. In 1993, just before the defence of my PhD thesis I had the pleasure to spend a 6-month training in Michel Safar's unit. This period was very fruitful for me. From the typical small studies, I was used to do in clinical pharmacology, I was now introduced by Stéphane Laurent in the larger epidemiological studies. In addition, we intensively discussed how to get the best possible results in clinical research. I remember from this period that Michel Safar spent many hours in the clinic. But his presence made the discussions within his staff very open and inspiring, encouraging young investigators to think about concepts. After my training in Paris, the close collaboration with Michel Safar and Stéphane Laurent continued and had a tremendous influence on my research and career. Many papers and chapters in books were the result of a joint effort. Three of these papers are listed below.

- Van Bortel LM, Balkestein EJ, van der Heijden JJ, Vanmolkot FH, Staessen JA, Kragten JA, Vredeveld JW, Safar ME, Struijker Boudier HA, Hoeks AP. Non-invasive assessment of local arterial pulse pressure; comparison of applanation tonometry and echo-tracking. *J Hypertens* 2001; 19:1037–1044.
- Van Bortel LMAB, Struijker-Boudier HAJ, Safar ME. Pulse pressure, arterial stiffness, and drug treatment of hypertension. *Hypertension* 2001; 38:914–921.
- Struijker-Boudier HA, Safar ME, Van Bortel LM. Effects of individual risk factors on the incidence of cardiovascular events in the treated hypertensive patients of the Hypertension Optimal Treatment Study. *J Hypertens* 2001; 19:2105–2107.

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