This paper demonstrates that a dominant X-linked gene is involved in the biological transmission of bipolar manic-depressive illness. This was done through the application of linkage methods using chromosomal markers in a large sample of families. The paper also emphasizes the notion that depression is heterogeneous from the genetic point of view since X-linked inheritance could not be found in unipolar depressive illness. These findings have now been replicated by our group and other laboratories and have stimulated interest and research in the area of molecular genetics of mental disorders. [The SCI® and SCCP® indicate that this paper has been cited in over 135 publications.]

This dream started to become a reality when I received a one-year fellowship from the Belgian American Educational Foundation to work in the Department of Medical Genetics at the New York State Psychiatric Institute in Columbia University in New York, where I was to stay from 1969 to 1974.

During my medical studies, I was fortunate to work as a research fellow in the medical genetics laboratory at the Free University of Brussels. It was then a great privilege to learn about the methodology of research and the philosophical implications of the new developments in modern genetics and neurobiology. Ever since my childhood, I have been fascinated by the complex interaction between brain and behavior; this led me to do a residency training in psychiatry, with the aim of combining genetics and psychiatry.

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