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SSN - NEWSLETTER Vol. 6(2) December 2007

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Editorial

Dear SSN members,

The 6th Forum of European Neuroscience (FENS), which will take place 12-16 July 2008 in Geneva, is now open for registration (<http://forum.fens.org/2008>). The deadline for early registration and abstract submission is 31st January 2008.

The Programme Committee and the LOC put together an interactive meeting with a highly interesting programme, which covers a wide range of topics from molecular to behavioural neuroscience:

- 20 Plenary and Special lectures, each chosen from the cutting edge of the field
- 11 Special Events, ranging from symposia at the intersection between neuroscience and humanities, information sessions on funding opportunities, the Theodore-Ott Prize Award ceremony to mainly social occasions.
- 56 Symposia, representative of the wide range of topics within the FENS and scheduled in 8 parallel sessions in the mornings and afternoons
- 7 Poster sessions, scheduled in the mornings and afternoons
- 4 Technical workshops in highly relevant topics.

A new feature on the FENS 2008 programme are the 8 Special Interest Socials, which will be held, in parallel, on Tuesday evening, from 18:30-20:30 at the Palexpo

Conference Center. They are a unique occasion to meet fellow scientists interested in a specific topic and vary from a purely social to a more formal event. For more details see below and the FENS 2008 website.

The Forum will be preceded by 11 satellite events in the Lemanic area, covering a wide range of topics.

Instead of the customary 20-30 travel fellowships, our society offers, jointly with Nestlé and the Swiss Academy of Sciences, 65 travel fellowships, all to attend FENS 2008. For more details, see below.

We invite you also to discover in this issue more about the Swiss participation in the Network of the European Neuroscience Schools, the 2008 SSN-IBRO fellowship, the Robert-Bing Prize 2008 and the Théodore Ott research grants for young researchers.

Stephanie Clarke
President SSN



Special Interest Socials at FENS 2008

Tuesday, July 15; 18:30 - 20:30
Palexpo Conference Center Geneva

The Special Interest Socials, a new feature of the FENS programme, invite you to meet with your fellow scientists. Two Socials are organised by journals, European Journal of Neuroscience and

Science, and are by invitation. Six others offer a wide range of activities (for more details and contact addresses, see <http://fens2008.neurosciences.asso.fr/pages/spsocials.html>) :

EUSynapse Social

This social event will introduce the European Consortium "EUSynapse" on synaptic physiology and pathology in the brain. Representatives of the network will be present to share their ideas with interested neuroscientists on how genetic mouse models can be used for studying the brain and combating diseases of the Nervous System. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

The NeuroNE Party

NeuroNE is a European FP6 Network of Excellence, researching into neurodegeneration and neural repair. Everyone is invited to join and will get the opportunity to try a popular part of the outreach programme. Get creative by building your own brain in play dough, guided by Dr. Lizzie Burns, a scientist-turned-artist. Refreshments and small bites will be offered by the NeuroNE network and there will be a cash bar.

North American graduate students & postdoctoral fellows social

A networking social for all North American graduate students and postdoctoral trainees attending the 2008 FENS Forum. Socialize and exchange ideas about your research, professional development issues, and experiences at the Forum. Light refreshments will be served. The event is sponsored by the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) and SfN representatives will be in attendance.

Sensory and Motor Systems Social

This social event will start with short presentations from distinguished speakers in honor of Mario Wiesendanger, followed by a social occasion with plenty of opportunity for

lively discussion. The event is sponsored by the Swiss National Center of Competence in Research, Neural Plasticity and Repair (NCCR Neuro), and is open to all registrants of the FENS meeting. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Sleep Social "Sleep for the brain"

Two European consortia, "Sleep Restriction" and "Enough Sleep", organize a Special Sleep Interest Social, which is open for everybody who is interested in sleep, sleep research and sleep medicine. The students working within the consortia will give a data blitz session explaining their research on sleep. Join us to learn about sleep, to get to know other sleep researchers and have great fun! Snacks and cash bar will be available.

Swiss Society for Neuroscience

This social event facilitates an exchange of ideas and contacts among basic scientists and clinicians, as well as research fellows and graduate and undergraduate students interested in Swiss neuroscience. Representatives from all major Swiss Universities, Research Institutes and Pharmaceutical Industry will be present. Those who are interested to get in contact with known Swiss neuroscientists or would like to work in a Swiss research laboratory or clinic are invited to participate. Light hors d'oeuvres will be provided and a cash bar will be open.

Satellite Symposia

Various Satellite workshops and symposia will take place before the opening of the Forum. Some of them last two days, others one day only and are taking place at the Conference Center as well as at other locations in the Geneva-Lausanne area (see <http://fens2008.neurosciences.asso.fr/pages/sat.html> for further details).

Third Molecular and Cellular Society-Europe Satellite Meeting

Several aspects related to cellular and molecular mechanisms of learning and memory will be discussed, including epigenetics, control of protein translation, regulation of at the network level and clinical applications. There will be a 'wine and cheese' poster session on Thursday evening July 10th and a symposium on Friday July 11th (from 9am to 5pm). Venue: Palexpo conference Center.

Approaches towards the roles of sleep in neuronal functions

This symposium aims at presenting a broad range of novel approaches towards elucidating the genetic, cellular, and systems bases of sleep regulation from the perspective of the function of sleep. It will illustrate the evolving views about sleep functions for neurons and neural circuits, and it will include presentations from researchers working from molecular, over physiological to clinical aspects of sleep. The symposium will conclude with a round table discussion providing an interdisciplinary debate of renowned exponents of novel concepts/hypotheses on sleep function, bringing together geneticists, rodent and human physiologists, and clinicians treating sleep disorders. Date: Friday July 11th, 2008, 9am - 7pm, Venue: University of Lausanne.

The Blue Brain Project: Reverse-Engineering Biological Intelligence

The Blue Brain project of the EPFL and IBM is the first comprehensive attempt to reverse-engineer the mammalian brain, in order to understand brain function and dysfunction through detailed simulations. The Blue Brain Project invites you to join an open discussion on future directions in reverse engineering large-scale biological systems, with presentations from world experts in systems biology, simulation and computing. This meeting will also provide a unique opportunity to

hear from the Blue Brain team itself, with presentations on the tools and workflow of reconstructing and simulating the neocortical column. Thursday July 10th and Friday, July 11th. Venue: Palexpo conference Center

Cell-cell adhesion mechanisms:
From development of synaptic networks
to cognitive dysfunction

The goal of this Satellite meeting is to shed new light on the mechanisms underlying neuronal cell-cell adhesion molecules. It will bring together world scientific leaders in the field of cell adhesion molecules covering a diversity of topics, ranging from molecular and cellular events regulating these processes and their implications for human diseases and cognitive dysfunction. From the generation and migration of stem cells to the growth of dendrites and axons and the formation and stabilization of synaptic contacts, all these processes appear to depend upon selective recognition mechanisms and regulations finely tuned by cell-cell interactions. The symposium will focus on the molecular and cellular events regulating these processes and their implications for human diseases and brain repair. The Satellite programme will comprise several oral sessions as well as open-discussions and poster sessions during 2 days (Thursday July 10th and Friday July 11th). Venue: Villars-sur-Ollon.

The Impact of Translational Science on
Neuronal Drug Development

The purpose of this satellite symposium is to discuss, and illustrate with recent examples, the positive impact that the relatively new area of translational science has had on drug discovery and development in the therapeutic areas of pain and neurodegeneration. Practical recommendations will be presented to facilitate prediction of clinical efficacy with novel therapies in both these areas. The symposium will be of interest to, and enhance communication and

understanding between, preclinical scientists, clinical researchers and physicians. Thursday, July 10th at 2pm – 5pm. Venue: Palexpo conference Center.

Inaugural cerebellar symposium:
Mechanisms of cerebellar function

The Symposium will be the inaugural event of the newly-formed Society for Research on the Cerebellum, open to scientists throughout the world active on cerebellar research, from basic to clinical science. The scientific goals of the Symposium are to highlight recent advances in our understanding of cerebellar function and to promote interaction among leading neuroscientists using a wide variety of approaches and methodologies to understand cerebellar function in health and disease. The scientific program includes sessions on the timeliest topics in cerebellar research, including developmental dynamics, the function of cerebellar circuitry from neurons to networks, and the role of the cerebellum in learning, timing, prediction and cognitive processes. Date: Friday July 11th, Venue: Ramada Park Hotel, Geneva.

Inhibition of stress kinase signalling as a
therapeutic tool against excitotoxicity and
cerebral ischemia

The European FP6 consortium STRESSPROTECT brings together European laboratories studying stress activated protein kinases (SAPK) signalling in the brain and the neuroprotective effects of SAPK inhibitors against Excitotoxicity. The consortium is organising a satellite symposium on their field of interest: Date: Saturday, July 12th, 1 pm 4.30 pm, Venue: Palexpo conference center.

Psychiatric disorders and their modelling
in animals: in search of symptoms or
syndromes?

Animals have been invaluable tools to model human pathophysiology. Their validity as models in psychiatry and

psychology, however, is often questioned because of intrinsic limitations. This symposium intends to stimulate the debate around strategies to design animal models of mood and thought disorders, assessing advantages and limitations of approaches based on the quest for measurable invariants, or endophenotypes, of psychiatric disorders, as compared to more integrative attempts to model syndromes. This symposium is addressed to young behavioural neuroscientist as well as to senior researchers. A limited number of young investigators will have the opportunity to present their work in a poster session, and to receive a short practical introduction to some techniques and methods in behavioural analysis. Dates: Friday, July 11th and Saturday July 12th. Venue: Psychiatric Hospital of Cery, Prilly-Lausanne.

Strengthening the connection: New targets, techniques and translational aspects of synaptic plasticity

This 'synaptic plasticity' symposium will cover key topics that span from the molecular/cellular level to the in-vivo electrophysiological/behavioural level and beyond (including translational aspects, drawing on examples of appropriate techniques used in patients). The impact of this evolving area will be discussed, highlighting recent discoveries and future prospects for prosecuting this mechanism in a number of neurological and psychiatric diseases. Date: July 10th 9am – noon. Venue: Palexpo conference center.

Synaptic and extrasynaptic signalling versus glia

Experimental evidence is rapidly emerging suggesting that synaptic activity-driven communication between neural and glial circuits plays a prominent role in the information processing in the brain. The proposed symposium aims at discussing the progress of research in this area: it will focus on the principles of diffusion-based actions of neuro- and

glio-transmitters leading to Ca²⁺-dependent intracellular signaling. The meeting is supported by the Human Frontier Science Program. Dates: Thursday, July 10th and Friday, July 11th. Venue: Fassbind Hotel Cornavin, Geneva.

Synaptic basis of disease

The last years have brought rapid progress in understanding the molecular and cellular mechanisms of brain disorders that are associated with alterations in synaptic function and synaptic plasticity. We are therefore organizing a meeting that will bring together experts studying synapses and disease at molecular, cellular and systems levels. In addition to a very distinguished group of invited speakers, we will have poster sessions and short oral presentations chosen from the abstracts as well as travel grants for students and postdocs. Dates: Thursday, July 10th – Saturday, July 12th. Venue: Centre Medical Universitaire (CMU), Geneva.

NENS

The Network of European Neuroscience Schools (NENS) offers a very successful range of neuroscience programmes throughout Europe. Six Swiss schools participate in the network and Jean-Pierre Hornung, the co-director of one of these programmes has just been elected by the FENS Governing Council to serve on the NENS committee.



Prof. Jean-Pierre Hornung, the newly elected member of the NENS committee, is co-director of the Lemanic Neuroscience doctoral programme of Lausanne- Geneva. He works at the Department of Cellular Biology and Morphology of the Faculty of Biology and Medicine at the University of Lausanne.

Swiss Neuroscience Programmes participating in NENS:

- Basel Neuroscience Program, at the University of Basel
- PhD & MSc Program in Neuroscience of the Neurex network, Neurex Basel
- Lemanic Neuroscience School, Universities of Geneva and Lausanne
- EPFL PhD Program in Neurosciences, EPFL, Lausanne
- International PhD Program in Neuroscience, Neuroscience Center Zurich
- Master of Science in Neural Systems and Computation, ETH and University of Zurich

SSN Travel Fellowships 2008

The Swiss Society for Neuroscience offers up to 65 travel fellowships to attend the FENS Forum 2008 in Geneva. Eligible are candidates who have submitted, as first author, an oral or a poster communication for FENS Forum 2008.

- 50 fellowships are sponsored by the Society for Neuroscience for PhD students and young postdocs who are members of a FENS Society and who work in Swiss, other European, or extra-European laboratories. The awards will be 500, 700 and 1000 CHF, respectively.
- 10 fellowships are sponsored by Nestlé and reserved for PhD students and young postdocs from Eastern European countries.
- 5 fellowships are sponsored by the Swiss Academy of Sciences, 500 euros each, and are reserved for PhD students from Eastern-European, newly-industrialized, and developing countries.

The applications will be reviewed and the fellowships awarded on a competitive basis. The applications should include copy of the Abstract, copy of registration and Abstract confirmation, short CV including a list of publications and letter of recommendation

Deadline: February 15, 2008.

Please submit your application via e-mail, in a single pdf file, to: Anne.Zurn@chuv.ch

Awards and Prizes

SSN-IBRO Fellowship For Young Investigators 2008

The SSN council is pleased to announce that the Swiss National Science Foundation once more accepted to finance, for 2008, the SSN-IBRO fellowship, aimed at providing a one year salary for a foreign post-doctoral fellow to conduct a research project in a Swiss laboratory (basic research or clinical research). Detailed information (guidelines) is available on the SSN web site. Please note that the successful candidate needs to have obtained his/her PhD degree by 30th April 2008. The deadline for submission: February 29th 2008. Please send your application to Prof. Andreas Lüthi, SSN Council member (see address on the SSN web site).

Swiss Academy of
Medical Sciences
Fund Théodore Ott:
for basic neurological
research



On the basis of the testamentary bequest of the physician, Théodore Ott (1909 – 1991), Professor of Neurology at Lausanne, research grants are awarded to young researchers (up to 45 years), who submit plans for projects in the field of basic neurological research that are considered particularly worthy of support. In accordance with the wishes of the donor, preference is given to Swiss researchers or research groups who wish to carry out the greater part of their projects in universities in Switzerland. In the year 2008, the SAMS will distribute 150'000 Swiss Francs from the Fund Théodore Ott.

Applications should be submitted in German, French, or English. The maximal amount granted cannot exceed 60'000 Swiss Francs per grant. Application forms may be downloaded from www.samw.ch. Deadline for application is 31 March 2007.

Robert-Bing Prize 2008:



The Robert Bing Prize is awarded from the fund established by the neurologist Robert Bing (1878-1956) and is given, in accordance with the stipulations of the founder's testament, to «scientists who have done outstanding work which has helped in the recognition, treatment and cure of neurological diseases» who will be encouraged by this prize to do further

research. At the founder's request swiss scientists and physicians (up to 45 years), who have promoted as authors of excellent publications recognition, treatment and cure of neurological disorders are preferred. The prize is awarded as a rule every two years and endowed with prize money of 50000 Swiss Francs.

Nominations may be submitted in German, French or English may be submitted to the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, Petersplatz 13, 4051 Basle, until March 31, 2008. Detailed information is available at www.samw.ch.
