In this issue

- BCN Annual Report 2019
- BCN’s participating faculties
- BCN’s science & education
- Influx of Master students
- Influx of PhD students
- Theses defenses
- Cheeky propositions
- Prize cabinet
- BCN Awards
- Grants & funding
- BCN’s media exposure
- Other activities & events
- BCN Newsletter
- Colophon
- NBTT conference

Photo by Sander Martens
Dear colleagues,

Hereby we would like to present you the annual report from the interdisciplinary Research School of Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences (BCN). We are happy to see that our 33rd year (!) has been productive in many ways; in terms of numbers of master students and PhD candidates and their evaluations of BCN education and tutoring, in terms of personal and collaborative research grants that were obtained by faculty, in terms of scientific meetings and retreats, and in terms of outreach and valorisation of neuroscience. This report provides highlights of all of these aspects.

Clearly, everything has changed due to the Covid-19 measures that were recently implemented. Many of you will be working from home, and you may be juggling with different work- and familial responsibilities. Some of you may be worried about yourselves or family members, some may have fallen ill themselves, and other colleagues may be working overtime in clinical duties. Wherever you are; we hope you will enjoy reading this annual report as a source of distraction and inspiration. And if circumstances permit, we hope you will continue to invest your much appreciated effort and enthusiasm for BCN and the field of Neuroscience.

Please note that we are organising a major BCN conference titled ‘Nothing but the Truth’. It was scheduled for October 2020, embedded with the activities of the Groningen Climate Week. By now, it is clear that we will have to reschedule it. Currently we plan to postpone it for a year, aiming for October 2021. This is a truly multidisciplinary endeavour focusing on the core of what we do as scientists, and how science may affect the society we live in. The current situation offers an unexpected illustration of its relevance. We will definitely keep you updated on this.

For now, we wish you all strength and good health in the period that lies ahead of us.

On behalf of the BCN board,

Robert Schoevers
BCN’s participating faculties

Who’s in BCN? There are five faculties from the the University of Groningen and one faculty from the University of Twente that participate in the Research School of Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience (BCN). From these faculties a selection of researchers affiliated with different research institutes (see below) are active within BCN.

1. The Research Institute Brain and Cognition from the Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMW) / University Medical Center Groningen (UMCG).

2. The Groningen Institute for Evolutionary Life Sciences (GELIFES): Neurobiology and Behavioural Biology and the Johann Bernoulli Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science (JBI) from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE).

3. The Heymans Institute (HI) from the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (GMW).

4. The Groningen Research Institute of Philosophy (GRIPh) from the Faculty of Philosophy (FW).

5. The Center for Language and Cognition Groningen (CLCG) from the Faculty of Arts (LET).

6. The Technical Medical Centre (TechMed Centre) from the University of Twente.

> MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND HERE
https://www.umcg.nl/EN/Research/InstitutesProgrammes/Research-Institute-Brain-and-Cognition/Programmes/Paginas/default.aspx
BCN’s science & education

One of the core goals of BCN is to stimulate multidisciplinary research within the field of neuroscience. Within BCN we do everything we can to bring our researchers into contact with each other in order to foster creative collaborations across faculties and disciplines. The results are shown in the projects, papers, grants, and new studies that are produced each year and highlighted in this annual report.

As for our education, we are more than happy with the fact that BCN’s master programme is regarded as the very best neuroscience programme in the Netherlands. The BCN Research Master’s programme has been awarded with the ‘Top Degree Programme’ predicate several times already, and this was again the case in 2019. Eva Teuling, BCN’s programme coordinator reports:

For the 6th year in a row, the Behavioural and Cognitive Neurosciences Research Master programme, which is coordinated by the Faculty of Science and Engineering, has been awarded as a Top Programme in the Keuzegids Masters (see https://www.keuzegids.org/ol/gidsen/ma19/topopleidingen), being the #1 Neuroscience programme in the Netherlands.

We believe the ongoing success of BCN is dependent on three unique aspects of this programme. First, we try to bring small-scale education, by admitting a maximum number of 15 students in each of the three tracks (Human and Animal Behavioural Neurosciences (B-track), Cognitive Neurosciences (C-track) and Clinical and Molecular Neurosciences (N-track). A second important factor is the interdisciplinarity of the programme. Students come from a broad range of disciplines, not only Biology, Life Sciences, and Psychology but also Movement Sciences, Computer Science, and Artificial Intelligence. Their lecturers come from no less than five faculties (Science and Engineering, Medical Sciences, Behavioural and Social Sciences, Philosophy and Arts). We train students to think outside ‘their’ field and come up with interdisciplinary research questions. Moreover, we have started giving an ‘interdisciplinarity prize’ since last year, for the student who has best shown to have stepped over the borders of disciplines.

The third aspect is a focus on research. BCN-students perform two large research projects during their master, and other courses in BCN are also strongly research-oriented. After graduation, around 75% of the students continue with a PhD project. Just to name a few: Recent graduates that now work in BCN Research Groups include Nena Lejko, Theresa Marschall and Minke de Boer (at UMCG), Kevin Ike and Romy Smit (at GELIFES) or Robbert van der Mijn (at Psychology). Many others work at other universities in The Netherlands, as well as abroad.

This unique combination of features helps BCN-lecturers to optimally prepare our students for their future (research) careers. Alumni mention that the small groups and the experience the students get during the two master projects really helped them get a head start with their PhD-projects. Since recent years, we have been monitoring our alumni more closely, and have created a community of (former) BCN-students that, also later in their careers, can help each other by starting collaborations or sharing job opportunities. For this, we started a BCN LinkedIn Group, which already provides a nice impression of current careers of our former students. In addition, the BCN Student Council will continue to organize the BCN Alumni Event every year.

We hope you, as a BCN Researcher will continue to supervise our students, thus maintaining the high quality of our programme.

On behalf of the BCN Staff,
Eva Teuling
Programme Coordinator BCN
(e.teuling@rug.nl)
In 2019, 37 students enrolled in the BCN Research Master’s degree programme, of which 25 (67%) were women. The proportion of students with a Dutch BSc (51%) is almost the same of the proportion of students with a non-Dutch BSc (49%). Interestingly though, the proportion of students with a Dutch nationality (32%) is lower than the proportion of students with a different nationality (68%).
Influx of PhD students

In 2019, 50 PhD students enrolled in the BCN PhD training programme, of which 66% were women.

This is quite a reduction from last year (which saw 90 new PhD students). A plausible reason for this is that the bursary student system was stopped. Four percent of the PhD students are from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE), 64% from the Faculty of Medical Science/University Medical Center Groningen (FMW/UMCG), 22% from the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (GMW) and 10% from the Faculty of Arts (LET).

The majority of PhD students comes from the Netherlands (58%), followed by Western Europe (18%), Asia (16%), United States (2%) and Latin America (6%).
In 2019, 44 PhD BCN students defended their dissertations. Five percent of the PhD students were from the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE), 73% from the Faculty of Medical Science/University Medical Center Groningen (FMW/UMCG), 11% from the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (GMW) and 5% from the Faculty of Arts (LET).

> A MORE DETAILED OVERVIEW IS AVAILABLE HERE
https://www.rug.nl/research/behavioural-cognitive-neurosciences/organisation/dissertations2019
Cheeky propositions

“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.” – Rumi

> Navid Shariari, BCN Newsletter issue 113

“A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying.” – B. F. Skinner

> Francesco Pinto, BCN Newsletter issue 113

The most frequently asked question when you work with fruit flies is ‘how to get rid of them?’

> Anita Faber, BCN Newsletter issue 115

“If at first you don’t succeed, try more times so that your failure will at least be statistically significant.”

> Chenghao Yang, BCN Newsletter issue 116

If you cannot do great things, then do small things in a great way (Napoleon Hill).

> Chenghao Yang, BCN Newsletter issue 116

“I always believed that you should keep trying until you succeed. Research, however, taught me the importance of understanding when to stop – mainly to maintain your sanity.”

> Despina Serlidaki, BCN Newsletter issue 116
Prize cabinet

BCN members were very successful in receiving many prizes and grants. An impression of a good year.

Young Academy

**Marie-José van Tol** has joined the Young Academy (De Jonge Akademie) of the Royal Dutch Academy of Science (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen; KNAW). The official induction of the new members took place on March 21, 2019. Membership lasts for five years.


**Faces of science**

BCN PhD student **Jidde Jacobi** has been selected to become one of 66 Faces of Science, a new platform by the Royal Academy of Sciences (KNAW), the Young Academy (De Jonge Akademie), and NEMO Kennislink, for young scientists to communicate with the general public about their research in the form of blogs and vlogs. Jacobi is a neurolinguist whose research focuses on speech problems in Parkinson patients.

[https://www.nemokennislink.nl/pagina/over-faces-of-science/](https://www.nemokennislink.nl/pagina/over-faces-of-science/)

**Philosophical research in Groningen judged “excellent”**

An international research assessment committee, which has evaluated philosophical research in the Netherlands, has judged the research conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy in Groningen as excellent, giving it the maximum score of 1 on all three categories: [1] quality of research; [2] relevance to society and [3] viability.

The committee also values the Kenniscentrum Filosofie (Knowledge Center Philosophy), which encourages and coordinates projects at the interface between philosophy and society. The committee concludes that the Groningen Faculty, as one of the last independent faculties of philosophy in the Netherlands, “is an exceptionally attractive place to work”.


**VICI**

**Liesbeth Veenhoff** (European Research Institute for the Biology of Ageing, UMCG), has been awarded with a VICI grant (€ 1.5 M) from the NWO. In this project, the aim is to learn how and why a cell changes when it ages. The research is specifically aimed at revealing changes in the nuclear pores: the gatekeepers to the nucleus. Eventually, this fundamental knowledge will contribute to discovery of the common cause of multiple age-related diseases.


**Young Academy Groningen (YAG)**

**Sahar El Aidy** (Faculty of Science & Engineering) is one of the new members of the Young Academy Groningen. She hopes to be an example for students from minority cultures and wants to bridge the gap between fundamental and applied research, as well as put gut bacteria on the map.


**Faces of science**

BCN PhD student **Jidde Jacobi** has been selected to become one of 66 Faces of Science, a new platform by the Royal Academy of Sciences (KNAW), the Young Academy (De Jonge Akademie), and NEMO Kennislink, for young scientists to communicate with the general public about their research in the form of blogs and vlogs. Jacobi is a neurolinguist whose research focuses on speech problems in Parkinson patients.

[https://www.nemokennislink.nl/pagina/over-faces-of-science/](https://www.nemokennislink.nl/pagina/over-faces-of-science/)

**Philosophical research in Groningen judged “excellent”**

An international research assessment committee, which has evaluated philosophical research in the Netherlands, has judged the research conducted at the Faculty of Philosophy in Groningen as excellent, giving it the maximum score of 1 on all three categories: [1] quality of research; [2] relevance to society and [3] viability.

The committee also values the Kenniscentrum Filosofie (Knowledge Center Philosophy), which encourages and coordinates projects at the interface between philosophy and society. The committee concludes that the Groningen Faculty, as one of the last independent faculties of philosophy in the Netherlands, “is an exceptionally attractive place to work”.

The Global Young Academy
BCN member Martijn Wieling (Computational linguistics) has been selected as a member of the Global Young Academy (GYA).
The new members joined the GYA in late April 2019 for a tenure of five years. The GYA is comprised of a group of outstanding young scientists from around the world, in the early stages of their independent academic careers. The GYA provides a rallying point for these individuals to come together to address topics of global importance. As of 2014, the GYA has reached its full capacity with 200 members. Members are selected for their scientific excellence and their commitment to service, and serve five-year terms.
https://globalyoungacademy.net/gya-in-brief/

Marleen Janssen awarded with Royal Decoration
On Friday 27 September, Prof. Marleen Janssen was appointed Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion. The Mayor of Heerenveen Tjeerd van der Zwan presented the award in Het Kasteel in Groningen.

Marleen Janssen (Breda, 1955), Professor of Congenital and Early-onset Acquired Deafblindness at the Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences of the UG, is the first and only professor in the world to hold a chair in this field. Since 1976, she has worked continuously and with considerable success on research into deafblindness and communication with people who have been deafblind since birth or from an early age. She is globally recognized as a figurehead and expert, who is dedicated to combating the unremitting social isolation of people who can neither hear nor see.

Translational Neuroscience Prize 2019 for Martien Kas
Prof. Martien Kas (GELIFES) received, on behalf of the PRISM consortium, the Translational Neuroscience Prize 2019 at the Dutch Neuroscience meeting. This prize is to acknowledge an individual or team of researchers in The Netherlands for recent innovative research that translates to an application beyond that of the laboratory.

Teacher of the year
Robbert Havekes (Groningen Institute for Evolutionary Life Sciences, FSE) was awarded as teacher of the year for Bachelor Biology/LS&T

Photo by Gerhard Taatgen

Photo by Elmer Spaargaren

Photo by Anna Leonte

Photo from RUG
BCN Awards

Awarded during the BCN Winter Meeting 2019

**BCN DISSERTATION AWARD 2018/2019**
Alain Dekker

**BCN PHD POSTER PRIZES**
Sarah Maass (Experimental Psychology)
Friederike Reesing (Radiology)
Jidde Jacobi (Linguistics)

**BCN MASTER STUDENT POSTER PRIZES**
Franciska de Beer
Toon Scheurink

Awarded during the BCN Retreat 2019

**BCN BEST PRESENTATION AWARD**
Marita Everhardt (Center for Language and Cognition)
Grants & funding (selection)

Projects of Marie-José van Tol and Robert Havekes receive funding through the NWA Idea Generator Grant

The NWO has granted funding to 37 out-of-the-box research ideas. An important aspect of the projects is a possible societal impact. Each of the researchers will receive €50,000 to work with various parties in society to further develop their ideas on a small scale. 


Research into the approach of negative body image through ‘unconscious conditioning’ receives NWA Idea Generator Grant

A negative body image is a core symptom of a number of serious mental disorders. Irina Masselman, Klaske Glashouwer and Peter de Jong from the Department of Clinical Psychology and Experimental Psychopathology at the University of Groningen aim to investigate whether a negative body image can be treated with a new method of ‘unconscious evaluative conditioning’.


ZONMw TOP subsidy

Marina de Koning-Tijssen has been awarded with a ZONMw TOP subsidy (€ 675 k). Her research group will investigate patients with tremor using artificial intelligence and other innovative techniques to find new ways to diagnose and treat these tremors.

https://www.zonmw.nl/nl/actueel/nieuws/detail/item/top-subsidie-voor-elf-excellente-onderzoeksgroepen/
Ubbo Emmius Junior Scientific Masterclass Talent Grant

Nick Schubert is one of the talented JSM MD/PhD students of the UMCG who won a UEF-JSM Talent Grant of 6.000 euros.

Funding for three new UG PhDs in the humanities

Research ranging from studies into online media fandom, the Landscape of the Northern Netherlands as Critical Material and speech planning and monitoring in Parkinson’s disease: three talented emerging UG researchers will spend the next few years carrying out research projects, thanks to funding from the NWO PhDs in Humanities programme.

One of these projects is called “Speech planning and monitoring in Parkinson’s disease” by Martijn Wieling, with T. Rebernik as the candidate PhD student. 

Top scientists from the University of Groningen and the UMCG are participating in two of the six awarded programs in the context of the prestigious NWO Gravity Programme for groundbreaking fundamental research, which involves more than 100 million euros. One of these projects is called “Hybrid Intelligence (HI): augmenting human intellect”, involving Prof. Verbrugge from the RUG.

Main applicant: Prof. dr. F.A.H. van Harmelen (VU Amsterdam).
Co-applicants: Prof. dr. M. de Rijke (UvA), Prof. dr. C.M.J. Jonker (TUD), Prof. dr. M. Welling (UvA), Prof. dr. L.C. Verbrugge (RUG), Prof. P.Th.J.M. Vossen (VU).
Amount awarded: 19.0 million euros

Hybrid Intelligence (HI) combines human and artificial intelligence. Six Dutch universities will develop theories and methods for intelligent systems that cooperate with humans, that adapt to dynamic circumstances and that can explain their actions. Ethical and legal values, such as transparency, accountability and trust, will be taken into account during the design of such HI systems. We will demonstrate applications of HI systems in healthcare, education and science to show the potential of artificial intelligence to amplify human intelligence instead of replacing it.

236.000 Euros for supporting patients recovering from depression

The University Center of Psychiatry, lectorate Rehabilitation of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, foundation ‘het Witte Bos’ from Amsterdam (AllesGoed.org) and MIND (National Psychological Health Platform), led by Professor Robert Schoevers, received a grant of € 236 k Euros from the VCVGZ Foundation. This grant will be used to start the STAIRS project. STAIRS focuses on supporting patients recovering from depression with resuming their lives.

Additional funding for adaptive learning algorithms to improve Dutch secondary education

Hedderik van Rijn renewed the collaboration with Noordhoff Publishers, allowing about half a million Dutch secondary education students to improve their studying using adaptive learning algorithms developed, partly, in the context of BCN research projects. Florian Sense (BCN Research Master graduate in 2012, BCN PhD promotion in 2017) and Van Rijn obtained funding from the US Air Force Research Laboratory securing a research position for Sense to work on further refining the integration of mathematical models of human memory and education systems.

National PKU Alliance

Robbert Haveks, together with Eddy van der Zee and Francjan van Spronsen, obtained a $ 40 k grant from the National PKU alliance for a project titled “The molecular circadian clock as a causal mediator of sleep-regulated neurophysiology and cognition”. The grant focuses on developing optogenetic tools to study the role of the molecular clock in the plasticity and memory phenotypes associated with sleep deprivation.

Jocelien Olivier

Jocelien Olivier obtained a NARSAD Young investigator grant from the Brain & Behavior research foundation ($ 70 k) as well as a ZonMW MKMD grant for Synthesis of Evidence (€ 17 k)

Alzheimer Nederland major grant

Ulrich Eisel (GELIFES, RUG), with Martina Schmidt (Mol. Pharmacology, RUG) and Helmut Kessels (Swammerdam Institute, VU Amsterdam) obtained € 180 k from Alzheimer Nederland for their research project titled “Improving memory retrieval by Epac2”.

Psychiatrists receive € 1,5 M from ZonMW

Iris Sommer and Wim Veling have received new funding for a follow-up of an existing 4-year research project into psychosis, thus extending it for another 6 years. This allows them to study a group of patients for a total period of 10 years, focusing on various aspects including treatment success, social environmental factors, genetic factors and personality traits.
BCN’s media exposure

BCN’s researchers have also been very active in speaking to the public through newspapers and online media, through books for general and specialist readers, and through TV and radio presentations.

Online media & television

BCN members have been very active in the media. We highlight the activities of Jocelien Olivier (FSE) and Gert-jan van Dijk:

Jocelien Olivier

1 op de 5 zwangere vrouwen krijgt depressie-klachten, mogen zij antidepressiva?
Vlog in ‘Dagblad van het Noorden’
> https://www.dvhn.nl/groningen/1-op-de-5-zwangere-vrouwen-krijgt-depressie-klachten-mogen-zij-antidepressiva-25141562.html

Universiteit van Nederland podcast: Dierenlab op Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
> https://universiteitsvannederland.nl/podcast/dierenlab-op-rijksuniversiteit-groningen

Oog Tv: Honderden gebreide neuronen vormen kunstwerk (Night of Art and Science 2019)
> https://www.oogtv.nl/2019/05/honderden-gebreide-neuronen-vormen-kunstwerk/

Dagblad van het Noorden: Insteken, draad omslaan en dan 279 neuronen (Project for Night of Art and Science 2019).

Initiated and demonstrated community art “neural knitwork” at the night of Art and Science in the Aa-kerk, Groningen
> https://nachtvankunstenwetenschap.nl/acts/community-art-neural-knitworks/

Participated in Galileo Figaro for the night of Art and Science. Harry Niehof made a Gronings song about my work and we performed together in Huize de Beurs, Groningen.
> https://nachtvankunstenwetenschap.nl/acts/galileo-figaro/

Goede reis! Magazine issue 04; winter 2019;
> page 29: Traveler interview.
Initiator and organizer of the “Noorderlichten, The University of Noorderzon” at the Noorderzon Festival.

1 Dagblad van het Noorden:

2 Radio Noord:
   > https://www.rtvnoord.nl/radio/programma/20700/Karel-op-Noord/aflevering/26264

3 Dagblad van het Noorden:
   > https://www.dvhn.nl/groningen/Sarah-7-vermaakt-zich-prima-op-Noorderzon-24744192.html

4 Gezinsbode:
   > https://gezinsbode.nl/artikel/1039748/mensen-kijken-in-de-achtertuin.html

5 Noorderzon website:
   > https://www.noorderzon.nl/programma/programma-items/young-academy-groningen-2

Using ethovision XT as educational tool. Video on the Noldus website and youtube:
   > https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrFhiz_Tfbs

---

Gert-jan van Dijk

Iedereen kan mee-eten voor de wetenschap - Foodlog
   > https://www.foodlog.nl/artikel/iedereen-kan-meeeten-voor-de-wetenschap/

Welke invloed heeft je eetpatroon op je gezondheid – RTV Noord
   > https://www.rtvnoord.nl/nieuws/206835/Welke-invloed-heeft-je-eetpatroon-op-je-gezondheid

Zorgt gezond eten voor mentale gezondheid – RTV Drenthe
   > https://www.rtvdrenthe.nl/nieuws/145834/Zorgt-gezond-eten-voor-mentale-gezondheid

Wat doen je darmen al je anders gaat eten – UK Krant
   > https://www.ukrant.nl/wat-doen-je-darmen-als-je-anders-gaat-eten/
Other noteworthy media exposure from other BCN members include

Interview with BCN couple in NRC
Iris Sommer and Robert Schoevers were interviewed together about their shared passion for science for NRC newspaper.

Dance your PhD
BCN PhD student Friederike Reeßing (Radiology), together with her colleague Piermichele Kobauri (department of Chemistry), was selected as one of the finalists of the international “Dance your PhD” competition for their video explaining the development of light-responsive MRI contrast agents. You can check out the video here:
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0woUTHp30o&t=6s

In order to participate in the contest, which is sponsored by Science Magazine and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), PhD students are asked to interpret their research in a dance. The contributions are judged on their scientific and artistic merit and the creativity in combining arts and science. More information about the competition can be found here:
> http://www.sciencemag.org/projects/dance-your-phd/faq

BCN on YouTube
Check out these BCN Researchers on YouTube:
> https://www.rug.nl/research/behavioural-cognitive-neurosciences/organisation/bcn-researchers-on-youtube
Marvelous Mind

Marvelous Mind started officially in 2019 and is a neuroscience outreach programme on the initiative of the research institute Brain and Cognition, from the UMCG. We modelled the concept in analogy to the initiative Brein in Beeld from Amsterdam (www.breininbeeld.nl), and we aimed to establish coverage of this concept in Groningen.

Our goal is to share knowledge, start conversations and spark interest concerning the brain, brain disorders, mental health issues, and ongoing research projects within the Brain and Cognition area of the UMCG. We address questions about brain function; in isolation, in relation to our bodies, to society and the rest of the world. Considering mental health issues, we focus on understanding, accepting, and informing about the treatment approaches; now and in the future.

We organize "Mind Movies", a thematic concept where a movie is introduced in +/- 15 minutes by an expert in the field, plus a short discussion after the movie. Furthermore, we work together with other parties of the University Hospital to organize other thematic gatherings. The themes that have been addressed so far are; suicide, forgetting, depression, epilepsy, dementia, learning a second language, deep brain stimulation, and artificial intelligence. Other themes we plan to address in the future are Down syndrome, sexuality, autism spectrum disorder, hallucinogens for depression and the use of laboratory animals in neuroscience.

Our target audience is the general public, patients and their family and students of all faculties. We try to provide an accessible experience for all interested parties, especially people...
who would not normally attend a scientific seminar and try to think of new ways to make our events more inclusive. Marvelous Mind is organized by both professionals and students from Brain and Cognition of the UMCG.

At this point, we have hosted multiple successful events at the theatre of the Groninger Forum. We have relocated with them to the new building and usually, all seats are filled. Currently, we host our Mind Movies on a bimonthly basis on Monday evenings. In addition to the Mind Movies, we contribute to other events, for example, Zpannend Zernike, Noorderzon and the Brain Olympiade and have worked together with other outreach parties, such as Science Linx. In 2020, we are also making a podcast series, called Braincast, which will consist of nine episodes. The themes will be comparable to our Mind Movies and will be posted and shared on several platforms, including but not limited to Spotify, KennisLink and Hersenstichting.

In the future, we plan on growing and integrating other regular outreach activities. We are thinking of PE activities and in general, having a bigger impact in Groningen and possibly in the Northern Provinces. We are always open to new ideas and collaborations, you can reach out to us via email; marvelousmind@rug.nl. Especially students (bachelor and master level) are most welcome to strengthen us with new outreach ideas and initiatives.

By Isabel Janmaat

Poster design by Sander Martens
Event photos by Simon Trel
Other activities & events

Opening Alzheimer Center Groningen

The Alzheimer Centrum Groningen (ACG) was presented to both the public and scientific community on January 24th, 2019. A series of presentations and discussions were held in the Rode Zaal of the UMCG that evening. The event featured talks from the directors Prof. dr. Peter Paul de Deyn and Prof. dr. Sophia de Rooij, Dr. Nynke Smidt, as well as from a patient with Alzheimer’s disease. The event also featured a short film that included interviews from participating ACG investigators and an interactive session with a patient, a caretaker and health professionals, culminating with the opening ceremony. The ACG not only attempts to answer preclinical, clinical, and epidemiological questions, but also seeks to impact the quality of life of patients and their caretakers.

Photo by Michiel Hooiveld

Notes on Synchrony

Notes on Synchrony was organized in the Groningen Grand Theatre as part of the Moving Futures festival on the 16th and 17th of March. It is a living laboratory of brain and movement research, based on the finding that the brain waves of two (or more) people synchronize when they are engaged in a range of activities like dancing, singing, or playing instruments together, but also cooperating on certain tasks or agreeing within a debate. A group of neuroscientists from the UG and a group of contemporary dancers set out to co-investigate the literal and metaphorical facets of this mental connection.

Photos by Valeria Cernei
BCN 2019 Winter meeting
This year’s winter meeting was special for the reason that it was the first time (ever?) that it didn’t take place in Groningen… No fewer than two busses headed to Enschede at 8.00 in the morning of February 7, 2019. Hosted by the DesignLab of the University of Twente, we were invited to attend a number of lectures and the traditional poster session in a trendy room that encouraged everyone to think outside the box, prompted by tables with legos and magnetic sand to play with during the talks. Perhaps the highlight of the day consisted of the tours around various labs, where guides showed off the technology of the future, including magnetic needles for robot surgery, all kinds of cutting-edge prosthetics, and head-mounted displays to facilitate walking for people with Parkinson’s Disease.

Photo by Sander Martens

BCN Retreat
The yearly BCN retreat in Odoorn allows PhD students to both partake in disseminating their research to peers, as well as to those who are not in their field. Specifically, at the “speed dating” event of this year’s retreat (21-22 March), students were encouraged to explain their research in a relatively short time frame, i.e., an elevator pitch. This not only helped in building communication skills, but it also provided an opportunity to create connections with researchers they may not have known beforehand. In combination with the presentations, bowling, hiking, mountain biking, and good weather, it resulted in a lively and fun event.

Photo by Michiel Hooiveld

BCN Symposium on computational modelling

Photos by Sander Martens and Michiel Hooiveld

U4 Society Summer School
And last but not least we had four beautiful newsletters!
There is a growing debate about trust and truth in Science, both within the scientific community and in a broader public arena.

Within the scientific community, researchers are more aware of problems concerned with the way science itself is organized. Controversial issues include poor reproducibility of findings, competition between scientists and journals for high impact and 'first findings', the importance of such ratings for individual research careers, the role of the funding system and the influence of commercial interests.

On a societal level, people have become more sceptical of scientific facts. Politicians, opinion makers and the general public may have trouble recognizing fact from fiction, and 'alternative facts' are used to support different agendas.

The BCN Conference 'Nothing but the Truth' will be devoted to 'truth and trust in science', both within the scientific community and in the broader arena. During a two-day conference, we will discuss several important topics in plenary lectures, interactive workshops and masterclasses by renowned experts. Confirmed speakers are John Ioannidis, Heather Douglas, Eric-Jan Wagenmakers, Wim van Saarloos (KNAW president), members of IPCC, and talk show host Arjen Lubach.

The conference takes place within the context of the Groningen Climate Adaptation Week, with presentations by Nobel Prize winners, former UN secretary prof. Ban Ki-Moon and members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

We specifically invite young researchers who are in the early stages of their careers, and provide input from their values and opinions.

The conference was originally planned to take place on October 19 & 20. Due to the corona-crisis we have decided to postpone it to October 2021. We will keep you informed!

For info & registration, visit www.nbtt2020.nl
Poster design by Sander Martens