

WELCOME TO OUR

March Newsletter

From Dana...

“Certain people - men of course- discouraged me, saying [science] was not a good career for women. That pushed me even more to persevere.”

Francoise Barre-Sinoussi, Virologist and winner of the Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine in 2008



Dana Visnitchi
(she/her)
Newsletter Co-director

HELLO WINUK COMMUNITY,

I'm Dana the new newsletter co-director.

I'm a medical writer who is passionate about neuroscience and mental health. I really admire the organisation's purpose, and I can't wait to contribute to it and show my support to other women in the field.

So stay tuned to hear from me, my co-director Giada, and other team members about what's going on at WiNUK!

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A LITTLE HISTORY...

This month was International Women's Day. Here at WiNUK, we always celebrate and support women's achievements, but in this edition, we wanted to highlight 5 brilliant neuroscientists who brought amazing contributions to the field. We'd also like to acknowledge all women neuroscientists who couldn't be mentioned here.



Prof. Dr Katrin Amunts (1962 -Present) is considered one of the most important neuroscientists of our time for her contributions to brain mapping. She is the director of the Institute of Neuroscience and Medicine in INM-1 in Forschungszentrum Jülich.

"[...] Strive for realising your ideas and don't stop just because someone does not like them. Work hard! Build up your own network and consider the support of eminent, senior scientists!"



Dr Alexa I. Canady (1950-Present) was the first African-American woman in the US to become a neurosurgeon. She has contributed to research to make advances in neurosurgical techniques, which led to the development of a programmable antisiphon shunt to treat hydrocephalus.

"People are just not very ambitious for women still. Your son you want to be the best he can be. Your daughter you want to be happy."



Dr T. S. Kanaka or Thanjavur Santhanakrishna Kanaka (1932-2018) was the first woman neurosurgeon in Asia, who pioneered stereotactic, functional and cerebral electrode implant surgery and developed a separate neurosurgical speciality in India

"Getting a master's degree in general surgery was not easy for me[...] When I applied for the MS programme, I was told I would never be accepted."

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Laboratory technician Manuela Serra (1900-1988) was one of the first women to work at the Spanish Neurological School of Santiago Ramón y Cajal in Madrid. In a 1921 paper, she reported for the first time the presence of microglia, which she called "mesoglia"

Neuroscientist Cajal about Manuela "Manolita" Serra for whom I have a paternal affection and great respect for her tireless hard work; eagerness to learn; her sharp, lucid intelligence; and her austere dedication to her duties as an employee"



Prof Anita Harding (1952-1995) was a neurologist and pioneer of neurogenetics, the first to identify mitochondrial DNA mutation in human disease. She also recognized the spectrum of trinucleotide repeat disorders in Huntington's Disease, and her research led to the discovery of deletions of mitochondrial DNA in Kearns-Sayre Syndrome

Professor Mary Reilly, President of the Association of British Neurologists about Anita "[...] As a woman she achieved new heights in Queen Square that had not been done previously and at no stage did she allow being female to limit anything she did. That attitude has stood me well"

OUR FIRST IN PERSON EVENT

Lizzie took attendees through a selection of statistics, including her research with ISTAART PEERs PIA into sexism and gender bias in dementia research, to raise awareness of issues contributing to the loss of women from dementia research with seniority.

She then outlined Women in Neuroscience UK's mission, multi-platform activities and impacts to date through our aims to inspire, connect and advocate for those identifying as female in neuroscience.

The second half of our session was dedicated to an interactive Q&A, with a fantastic panel of women in dementia research, Prof Fiona Ducotterd PhD, Prof Afia B Ali and Dr Kamar Ameen-Ali. Thank you for providing your honest experiences & advice on nuanced topics - you made great impacts upon the audience even in the short time we had.

➔ For our panel, we selected the most upvoted Slido questions to ask, but if we didn't manage to get your Q to be Aed within the session time, do stay tuned for upcoming WiNUK blogs on the session's remaining questions!



Thank YOU to everyone who took time from their lunch break to attend Women in Neuroscience UK's first ever in-person event, 'Tackling gender gaps in dementia research with WiNUK' at #ARUKConf24.

We were thrilled by the turnout, broad demographics & stellar engagement!

➔ If you attended our #WiNUKxARUK event, please submit your feedback to help shape future Women in Neuroscience UK events: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecnZS92fcY0UizZf5gG_GEB6E_cUsV_dMTp8uM0jdTdgnUqA/viewform

Did you attend our lunchtime event?

Share your feedback!



@WomeninNeuroUK

EXHIBITION STALL ROUND UP



Our first in-person exhibition stall

[#WiNUK](#) materials are in 3D for the first time!

At the end of February, we were hosted at the [@GENChemCam's @IUPAC](#) Global Women's Breakfast to showcase our approach to gender equality in science.

It was a pleasure for Lizzie to attend this event to promote Women in Neuroscience UK alongside other equity in STEM networks, including [@QiCNetworkCam](#) and [@BWISNetwork](#).

Women in Neuroscience UK's exhibition stall at #ARUKConf24

Our presence at the largest dementia conference in the UK was a great success!

At our exhibition stall, from 20-21st of March in Liverpool:

- we met WiNUK members old and new
- you loved our first-ever merch
- we had productive discussions with attendees of different gender identities
- discussed collaborations with other organisations at the conference
- collected many responses to our research survey, 'Sexism and gender bias in dementia research cultures: uncovering the past and present to inform the future'. We hope this study will help to better understand issues facing dementia researchers and to then better tailor WiNUK's advocacy approaches.



➔ Message us if you didn't get time for our survey at [#ARUKConf24](#) - the more respondents we have, the stronger our data! People of all gender identities are encouraged to submit their thoughts.

SHOUTOUTS

Big thanks to Alzheimer's Research UK for platforming Women in Neuroscience UK at our first in-person conference. Thank you for your patience as we navigated in-person content, and for the warm and helpful support from so many ARUK team members, particularly Emma Stone.

Special thanks to Lizzie English, Rebecca Parker, Rachel Grasmeder Allen & Ginevra Sperandio for working on the survey design.

Shoutout to the WINUK Design Team who worked together with Lizzie on the banner and merchandise (Ginevra Sperandio, Georgina Savastano, Lilly Green, Marleyna Z.).

Lizzie couldn't have done exhibition stall preparations & delivery without our amazing Women in Neuroscience UK volunteers, especially Rebecca Parker & Ginevra Sperandio who joined us in person!

Finally, thank you Alzheimer's Research UK #ARUKConf24 for bringing Women in Neuroscience UK volunteers from Paris, Cardiff and Cambridge together! P.S. Look at the cute handmade scrunchies that Giny made for us- such a nice surprise when setting up the stall.



DONATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Thank you to those who helped to finance WiNUK's first in-person resources:

- Our GoFundMe supporters (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/women-in-neuroscience-uks-first-inperson-event>),
- [UK Dementia Research Institute](#),
- [Alzheimer's Research UK East Network](#).

Every small amount made a big difference to our [#ARUKConf24](#) success.

➔ Get in touch if you're a company, charity or individual interested in donating or collaborating to support WiNUK's future!



SUPPORT WINUK VOLUNTEERS

One of our volunteers, Julia, is going to run half a marathon in April, to raise funds for **ADHD Embrace**. You can show your support by donating whatever you can here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/julia-dabrowska-1707408426050>

Another volunteer, Clio, is also running a half marathon in April, to support **Alzheimer's Research**. Here's where you can donate whatever you can:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/cliodhna-hall?utm_source=slack&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=cliodhna-hall&utm_campaign=pfp-slack&utm_term=d9bce88f51da4d13899e2e4a0a3c7470

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our second Neural Networking event is scheduled for April!

Title: "Neural Networking - Past and Future"

Date: 18 April (Thursday)

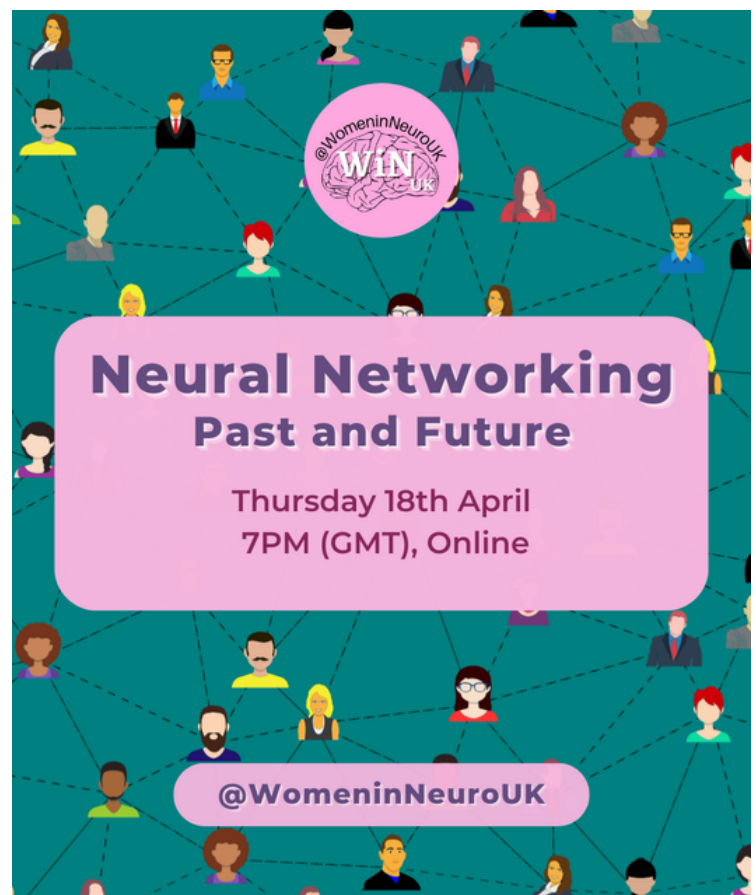
Time: 7- 8 PM (GMT)

Hosts: Aarushi and Ayesha

Welcome to the second edition of our much-anticipated Neural Networking event. This unique virtual event series is dedicated to exploring our journeys of inspiration and forward-looking aspirations in the realm of Neuroscience. This virtual gathering is a unique opportunity to explore what initially drew us to this fascinating field and to share visions for the future that keep our scientific curiosity alight.

Flow of Events

- Brief introduction about WiNUK by Lizzie
- Brief introduction about the agenda of the event
- Introduction of the moderator - 5-minute talk.
- Splitting the whole group randomly into two break-out rooms led by a host.
- Within each breakout room, the hosts encourage conversations on:
- The Past session (15 min) - the hosts and participants share their personal inspirations and the moments that ignited their passion for Neuroscience.
- The Future Session (15 min) - the hosts and participants discuss the aspirations and challenges that lie ahead in their careers.
- Join back to the main group with signposting to social media and feedback forms



Link to sign-up form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdJct5FKYZ6DfNEX3CyKyNYt7sfZoEFgFTS1Ufoad0-1P8zeQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

SOCIALS

This month our socials have been absolutely buzzing, with more engagement and more content posted than ever before.

Brain Awareness Week

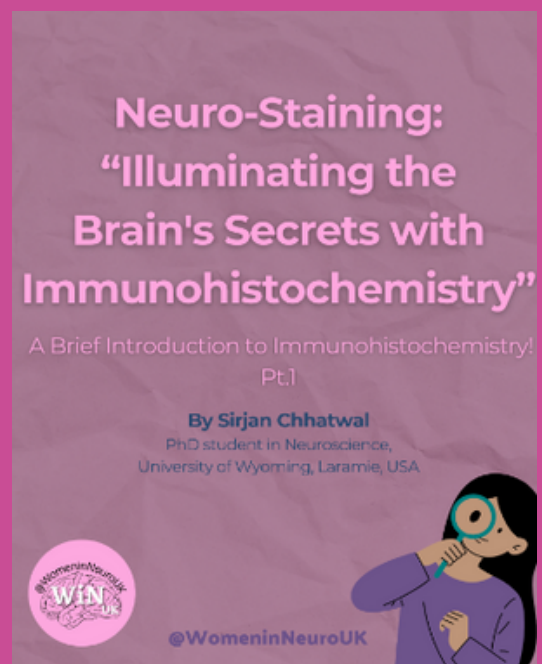
Brain Awareness Week was a week-long initiative to promote awareness of neuroscience and neurological diseases from brain anatomy to the history of ketamine. It was a huge success, with multiple educational and insightful infographics and videos going out each day from us and external collaborators. We hope you enjoyed the content, and congratulations to the two winners of the competition we launched at the end of BAW. I hope you look forward to receiving your goodies!



PYLT series

We're back with the PYLT series! In this month's instalment of the Present Your Lab Technique (PYLT) series, Sirjan presented immunohistochemistry.

Stay tuned for upcoming instalments of the PYLT series, where more innovative techniques in neuroscience will be explored and shared.



SOCIALS

Equity Issue in Neuroscience - DEI

This month, the Equity in Neuroscience series delved into various aspects of DEI, shedding light on the importance of fostering a diverse and inclusive environment within the neuroscience community.

Topics covered in the discussion included addressing systemic barriers faced by underrepresented groups, promoting access to opportunities, and cultivating a supportive culture that values diverse perspectives.

Stay tuned for the next part of the Equity Issue in Neuroscience series, as we'll continue creating meaningful dialogue about the challenges towards creating a more equitable and inclusive landscape within neuroscience.

'A day in the life of a neuroscientist'

Our TikTok is up and running, kicking off with a series coordinated by our lovely content strategist Neave: A day in the life of a neuroscientist. Look out for videos from other WiNUK members who are sharing their #DITL.



BLOG 'MONTH IN REVIEW'

This month our blog has featured several stars in the Neuroscience research field, both past and present:

Spotlight on Women in Neuroscience

Laura Elin Pigott
UN Women Delegate, Neuroscientist, Researcher & Lecturer

We revived our Spotlight on Women in Neuroscience series, interviewing Laura Elin Pigott, UN Women Delegate and researcher and lecturer at South Bank University, who imparted some fantastic words of wisdom and encouragement.

Tau do you solve a problem like dementia?
How inhibiting tau phosphorylation could be a potential therapeutic for Alzheimer's Disease

by Catherine Turnbull

In honour of the Alzheimer's Research UK Conference, we have a new piece 'Tau do you solve a problem like dementia?', delving into the role of tau phosphorylation.

Unveiling the Legacy of Rita Levi-Montalcini:

A Trailblazer in Neuroscience

by Meghna Solanki

New Blog Post



For International Women's Day, we explored the life of 'trailblazer' in neuroscience, Rita Levi-Montalcini, the discoverer of nerve growth factor and Nobel Prize winner.

Brain Awareness Week 2024

The brain, menstrual cycle & female sex hormones:

acknowledging sex bias in neuroimaging research.

by Katherine Mortimer

And for Brain Awareness Week, we had a fantastic feature piece on the brain, menstrual cycle and female sex hormones, acknowledging sex bias in neuroimaging research.

Bridging The Gap:

Jessica Agnew-Blais



With it being neurodiversity celebration week, we also began an inspiring new interview series, 'Bridging the Gap' in Neuroscience fields, kicking off with Jessica Agnew-Blais' ADHD research and delayed diagnoses for women.

If you've missed these thought-provoking articles, visit the blog to catch up:
Blog | Womeninneurouk (womeninneuroscience.wixsite.com)

BLOG

Fancy writing for the WinUK blog , but not sure what to write about?

Not to worry - the editors regularly put together a collection of prompts to get you started.

REALITY

Section Editor: Lauren Wallis

- "Spotlight On"
Interview Series:
Irene Di Giulio
- Women Who
Inspire: Alzheimer's
Research

RESEARCH

Section Editor: Julia Dabrowska

- Linking air pollution to
neurological disease:
<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/neuroscience/articles/10.3389/fnins.2024.1351721/full>
- Are you in the flow?:
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/03/240304135813.htm>

REVIEW

Section Editor: Rebecca Pope

- ARUK Conference
Review (Liverpool,
20th-21st March
2024)
- Book Review: 'In
Pursuit of Memory:
The Fight Against
Alzheimer's' by Joseph
Jebelli

To pitch an idea for the blog, or to select a prompt, please contact us on

blog.womeninneuroscience.uk@gmail.com

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