Welcome to our 2nd Newsletter which is a bumper issue! First, we have some important announcements in relation to our Braga meeting. This includes the information on the abstract and travel award application process including deadlines. Just prior to the conference, there will be a workshop for early-career researchers titled, ‘From networks to behaviour and back’ so we have included some details on that too. Secondly, to whet your intellectual appetite, we have the final list of symposia sessions to be held as well as features on the different plenary speakers. Thirdly, we announce the winners of the Distinguished Achievement and Young Scientist Awards. Aside from these meeting announcements, we have a feature on our outgoing treasurer, Anne Jackson. We’re excited to also feature a piece by Virginia Weiss who recently published an interesting paper in our society journal, Psychopharmacology. Finally, we have a new section on recently posted jobs. As always, we are happy to receive feedback on all things EBPS via email (generalsecretary@ebps.org) or via our Twitter and Facebook pages. We hope to see as many of you as possible in Braga in August. But till then, may your days be filled with successful experiments and meaningful data!

John F. Cryan PhD MRIA
President EBPS

Abstracts
Abstracts must be submitted via the online application form (https://ebpsmeeting2019.org/abstract/) by the 15th of June. They must not exceed 300 words in length and must include the details of all authors involved as well as the funding source. Twelve abstracts will be selected for oral communication (8 min + 2 min Q&A) to be allocated to Mini-Symposia sessions.

Travel Grants
The EBPS will offer travel awards for 2 postdocs and 6 PhD students who want to attend the EBPS meeting 2019. Travel award winners will receive a cash award of €500. All applicants must be EBPS members at the time of application and in good standing with their membership fees. Participants must submit an abstract to be eligible for Travel award applications. The Travel Award applications should be made through the online abstract submission form until the 15th of May. Applicants are additionally asked to submit a 2-page CV (NIH format).

Dates to Remember
Abstract Submission - 15th of June
Travel Award Application - 15th of May
Early Registration - Ends 30th of June
Late Registration - 1st July to 20th August
Workshop Application - 15th of June
Symposia

Chair - Charles Bradberry, USA

Novel Pharmacological Approaches Towards Remediating Negative Symptoms in Schizophrenia.
Chair - Mark Geyer, USA

Orexin as a Critical Mediator of Cortical and Subcortical Regulation of Motivated Behaviours.
Chair - Paolo Campus, USA

Role of Neuroinflammation and Glial Mechanisms in Anxiety and Depression: Novel Therapeutic Approaches.
Chair - Nicolas Singewald, Austria

The Need for Weed: Emerging Roles of Cannabis and Cannabinoids in Reward-related Behaviours.
Chair - Steve Mahler, USA

Brain Circuits of Prosocial Behaviour.
Chair - Louk Vanderschuren, The Netherlands

Putting the Effort In: Translational Models of the Allocation and Application of Effort and Its Role in Psychiatric Illness.
Chair - Catherine Winstanley, Canada

Neuropharmacology of Aggression as Reward.
Chair - Klaus Miczek, USA

Emerging Strategies for the Treatment of Stress-related Psychiatric Disorders.
Chair - Olivia O’Leary, Ireland

A Role for the Insular Cortex in Alcohol and Substance Use Addictions?
Chair - Wolfgang Sommer, Germany

Peripheral Mediated Changes to Motivational Salience.
Chair - Richard O’Connor, USA

Punishment and Aversive Decision-making: Basic Mechanisms and Clinical Applications.
Chair - Gavan McNally, Australia

Modelling Comorbidity of Chronic Pain and Affective Disorders: Towards Improved Mechanistic Understanding and Treatment.
Chair - Hugo Almedia, Portugal

Novel Insights into the Molecular Mechanisms and Cell Ensembles Regulating the Neural Circuits Underlying Negative Emotion.
Chair - Andrew Holmes, USA

Recent Insights into the Mesocorticolimbic Circuit Mechanisms of Appetitive Behaviours.
Chair - Eisuke Koya, UK

Taking a Rewarding Trip down Memory Lane Paved with Ensembles and Engrams.
Chair - Leslie Whitaker, USA

Opioids and Opioid Use Disorder: What We Know and What We (Still) Don’t Know.
Chair - Aldo Badiani, UK

Reward, Stress and Effort in Food Related Decision-making.
Chair - Merce Correa Sanz, Spain

Novel Opioid Agonist-based Medications for Pain and Opioid Addiction.
Chair - Yavin Shaham, USA

Chair - Giovanna Paolone, Italy

The Transcriptomic Basis for Neuronal Function and Behaviour.
Chair - Anand Gururajan, Australia
Prior to the start of the conference, on the 28th of August, there will be a special, free EBPS workshop for early career researchers to provide an overview on techniques to analyze rodent behaviour as well as to record and/or manipulate the activity of relevant brain networks. Organised by Professor Nuno Sousa (pictured above left), the program will consist of several sessions including a plenary by Professor Alcino J. Silva, who is the Director of the Behavioural Testing Core at UCLA (above right). There will be a range of hands-on sessions for participants to train in the use of various behavioural paradigms, ex-vivo and in-vivo circuit manipulation techniques as well as instruments to record local field potentials in freely moving rodents. This will be a workshop with a limited capacity (24 max) and there is no charge for attendance.

If you’d like to participate, workshop applications should be made through the online abstract submission form (https://ebpsmeeting2019.org/submission/) by the 15th of June. Applicants are additionally asked to submit a 2-page CV (NIH format) and a proof of status (either student or post doc) in the online form. Selection of the Workshop Participants will be made based on the submitted abstract and CV (2-page CV NIH format to be submitted in the online registration form). Note, that applicants must be students (MSc and PhDs) or postdoc researchers. They should also have submitted an abstract.

Is your membership current?

Just a reminder to check that your membership is current and if not, please renew here. Full membership remains at €70 and the student fee at only €15. The benefits are numerous and include discounted registration at this year’s Braga conference!

The winner of the 2019 Distinguished Investigator Award is Professor Harriet De Wit. She is the current Professor and Director of Psychiatry of the Human Behavioural Pharmacology Laboratory at the University of Chicago. She is a pioneer in the field of clinical psychopharmacology with over 200 publications which have been cited over 27000 times. Harriet serves as a consultant to the US FDA and is a Principal Editor for Psychopharmacology. She is also plenary speaker at this year’s EBPS biennial conference in Braga. Congratulations Harriet!

The winner of the 2019 Young Investigator Award is Dr Marco Venniro for his research examining the influence of social cues on behaviours related to drug addiction which was recently published in Nature Neuroscience. Marco is a CCB Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr Yavin Shaham’s lab at the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA). Marco received a Doctorate in Pharmacy from the University of Palermo in 2012. Following a 2-year fellowship at NIDA, he received his Ph.D. in translational biomedicine from the University of Verona in 2016. Prior to this award, Marco has also been the recipient of a Fellows Award for Research Excellence from the NIH as well as a travel award from EBPS. Congratulations Marco!
Plenary Speakers

Promises and pitfalls of translational research in addiction

Professor Harriet de Wit
Harriet de Wit is currently Director of the Human Behavioral Pharmacology Laboratory at the University of Chicago. She obtained her PhD in Experimental Psychology from Concordia University in Montreal Canada. Prof. de Wit leads a world-class research lab which focusses on the physiological, subjective (i.e., mood-altering) and behavioural effects of drugs in healthy human volunteers. She is also the Principal editor for the EBPS journal, Psychopharmacology.

How we got alcohol addiction wrong: one lever at a time.

Professor Markus Heilig
Markus Heilig is the Professor of Neuropsychiatry and founding Director of Center on Social and Affective Neuroscience at Linköping University in Sweden. He obtained his PhD and MD from Lund University and was a postdoc at The Scripps Research Institute. Prof. Heilig’s research group uses a range of techniques which include functional brain imaging to investigate the brain processes and long-term adaptations which are involved in addiction with a view to identifying novel mechanisms for therapeutic targeting.

How neuronal circuits can shape “immune behaviour”

Associate Professor Asya Rolls
Asya is a Principal Investigator at the Ruth & Bruce Rappaport Medical School, Technion, Israel Institute of Technology. She obtained her PhD from the Weizmann Institute and was a postdoc in the Department of Psychiatry at Standford University. Prof. Asya’s research group examines how neuronal networks in the brain involved in reward behaviour and sleep influence the immune system.

Habenular regulation of obesity related abnormalities in food preference and motivation

Professor Paul Kenny
Paul Kenny is the Ward-Coleman Professor and Chair of the Arthur M. Fishberg Department of Neuroscience and the Director of the Drug Discovery Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mt Sinai. He obtained his PhD from the University of London. Prof. Kenny’s lab uses a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the the neurobiological mechanisms and pathways implicated in disorders such as drug addiction and obesity with an emphasis on developing small molecule therapeutics.
As preclinical researchers, we typically attempt to produce results that are as relevant as possible to clinical outcomes. Unfortunately, while drug use in humans is almost always initiated in the presence of peers, most animal models of drug abuse assess self-administration in the absence of any social context. Our work is attempting to remedy this shortcoming by using a custom-built apparatus with two adjacent operant compartments in which rats can interact through a wire screen partition.

Several previous reports have used social operant chambers to examine acquisition of drug taking, but there is almost no literature regarding reinstatement of drug seeking in a social setting. We recently published our first set of findings on this topic in Psychopharmacology (Volume 235, Issue 12: 3391-3400). Briefly, we trained rats to self-administer cocaine in the presence of one peer and saline in the presence of a different peer. Following extinction, rats reinstated drug-seeking when re-introduced to the cocaine-associated peer, but not the saline-associated peer. These results are important because they indicate that, much like drug paraphernalia, re-association with drug-using peers during abstinence may elicit craving.

Behind the scene of this publication, we encountered a couple of interesting challenges. At first, we did not know if visual contact between peers was sufficient for recognition or if olfactory and tactile contact was also necessary. To answer this question, we inserted either a Plexiglas or wire screen partition between the two adjacent operant chambers. Rats were trained to respond for food on one lever when a peer was present in the adjacent compartment and to respond on a different lever when no peer was present. Results (unpublished) revealed that rats trained with the wire screen partition were able to use the peer as a discriminative stimulus to signal which lever to press, but rats trained with the Plexiglas barrier could not. Based on this experiment, we felt confident that any behavioural differences in future experiments would require visual, olfactory and tactile contact between peers.

Another challenge we had was related to lever position. Other studies have placed the active lever close to the wire mesh partition to force the rats to spend more time in close proximity to one another, rather than using traditional counterbalancing methods. In order to make a decision about which method to enact, we analyzed data to show that counterbalancing lever position had no significant effect on observed behavior.

Since we have been able to get most of the glitches out of our model, current research being conducted by Dr. Lindsey Hammerslag in our laboratory is comparing the strength of social cues to traditional non-social cues (light, tone) in eliciting reinstatement. Also, in collaboration with Dr. Valery Grinevich at the University of Heidelberg, we are using chemogenetic technology to determine the role of the prosocial hormone oxytocin in social-induced reinstatement. The ultimate goal of this research is determine how social influences modulate drug relapse so that more effective relapse prevention strategies can be developed in humans.
Dr Jackson served as a Treasurer for the EBPS Executive Committee from 2013-2018. She has retired from research but maintains an active schedule which includes sailing. She took time to do a Q&A with us.

**Tell us a little about your academic journey.**

I actually began my career in in vitro pharmacology. However, I was always much more interested in behaviour so as soon as I could, I diverted via a Masters in Neuroscience and a PhD in Psychology. After completing my PhD I went into industry, working as a pre-clinical CNS researcher, first for a couple of French drug companies, then later, back in the UK, for an American firm. My spell in industry gave me a different experience and a broad knowledge of behavioural research. I then returned to academia at the University of Sussex, where initially I continued in pre-clinical research, but I also began my first studies in human psychopharmacology there. After a number of years at Sussex I took a lectureship at the University of Brighton (about a mile down the road!) and happily was able to continue research collaboration with Sussex.

**Based on a cursory viewing of your publications, we see you have a particular interest in the pharmacology of drugs of abuse. How did your interest in this area arise?**

Over the years, a number of factors have contributed to this. When I was a young scientist, findings from pre-clinical researchers about the links between dopamine, reward and addiction were just beginning to be published – it was a very exciting time. I also worked on glutamatergic drugs in my first industrial job. A lot less was known about glutamate in those days and so the potential for new CNS drug development in that area seemed very great. Coupled with this, I was always fascinated by conditioning and which brain mechanisms might underly it. I think if you put all those factors together, it was almost inevitable that I would end up in an addiction-related area.

**As a researcher focused on human behavioural pharmacology – what have been the major changes in the field over your career?**

In my time I have seen the SSRI’s supercede the old antidepressant drugs and now, perhaps, glutamate will offer another leap for treatment. I’ve also seen the growth of new and interesting areas such as psychoneuroimmunology or the study of developmental disorders. Obviously, the development of imaging techniques has been of major importance. Not least of course, has been the sheer amount of knowledge that pre-clinical science has generated about the addictions, and which is now being translated into human science. These days we are even seeing the development of new treatment approaches in addicts, which have arisen as a direct result of all those years of hard work.

**What do you envisage as key research questions which need to be answered to advance the field?**

We still need to understand how we might actually reverse damaging changes that have arisen from years of substance use. It’s great to help people conquer their addictions, but they can still be vulnerable. I know that this is a really hard question, but having got the field so far, why stop now?

**Looking back on your academic career, what advice do you have for up- and coming researchers in neuroscience?**

My advice is to be flexible, in lots of ways. Don’t restrict yourself to a particular career path. I know that there are far fewer industrial opportunities these days, but if something does come up, consider it seriously. You can learn a lot! Don’t be afraid to move
You’ve been a member and treasurer for EBPS for several years now. Any memorable moments? What would you like to see more of in the future for EBPS?

Well, I joined the EBPS in 1988, so that’s quite a lot of moments to think about! So rather than pick just one moment, the overriding sense that I have after all these years, is the one of the community that the EBPS is. I think almost all of my really important career mentors have been stalwart members of the EBPS. And there are many more wonderfully helpful people, who haven’t been direct working colleagues, but who I have met through the EBPS. I would like to see more membership of the EBPS from broader neuroscience and particularly from younger scientists. There is a tendency these days to regard society membership as simply a means to obtain a reduced conference registration fee. But this is to overlook the community side, which is so very important for a career in science. Maintaining global connections in science is essential and despite the “European” in it’s name, the EBPS was founded by a group of international researchers and still is very much an international organisation.

How are you hoping to enjoy your retirement?

I’ve been a keen sailor for some time now, but as I’m sure you know, the UK weather can be a little variable. So I’m looking forward to being able to go sailing if it happens to be nice weather, rather than just hoping for a good weekend. I’ve also always wanted to do some art, so I am now taking classes for that. That’s not to say that I’ll be forgetting about science though – I’m still interested and I guess I will always carry a little bit of the EBPS with me!

Have your details changed?

All our communications with members are carried out online. If we don’t have your most recent email address, then you miss out! So if you’ve moved labs or countries recently, let us know by sending us an email with your new details! generalsecretary@ebps.org

www.ebps.org
Meet our new Treasurer -
Dr Mohammed Shoaib

Mohammed Shoaib is senior lecturer at the Institute of Neuroscience, Newcastle University in the United Kingdom. Over the past 30 years, Mohammed has been actively researching on the behavioural effects of nicotine surrounding the dependence-producing effects and more recently, nicotine’s cognitive-enhancing effects. His initial training in behavioural pharmacology started out under the mentorship of Ian Stolerman, one of the founding members of EBPS, working at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. His research focussed on unravelling the underlying neurobiology of the dual motivational properties of nicotine in rats. Successful defence of his PhD thesis lead to the award of a Wellcome Trust International fellowship to examine rewarding effects of opioids and endocrine function under the direction of Toni Shippenberg at the Max Planck Institute for Psychiatry in Munich. It was here in Germany that Mohammed developed his research skills further by working in collaboration with a newly-appointed post-doctoral fellow, Rainer Spanagel.

Following a very productive time in Munich, he was attracted by the prospect of working with some of the most eminent operant conditioning behavioural pharmacologists at the National Institute of Drug Abuse in Baltimore. As a Fogarty training fellow, Mohammed worked in the section headed by Steve Goldberg, another long-standing member of EBPS. This fellowship proved to be instrumental in developing the next stage of his career as an independent behavioural pharmacologist. Having demonstrated that nicotine self-administration was dependent on the strain of rats and previous drug history, the time was right for him to return home to UK. Mohammed was successful in obtaining national and European sources of research funding in collaboration with his former mentor Ian Stolerman back at the Institute of Psychiatry. After seven years as a senior scientist, Mohammed made the move to Newcastle University to lead his own laboratory within the Institute of Neuroscience. He has enjoyed tenure for the last 16 years and is recognised as one of the leading laboratories researching on nicotine neurobiology.

Mohammed’s first association with EBPS was as an attendee at a workshop on dopamine held in Malta. The following year, he registered to attend the biennial meeting in 1990 organised in Crete, unfortunately, this was the one and only EBPS meeting to be cancelled due to events taking place in Kuwait. However, he did manage to present his first poster at the next EBPS meeting in Noordwijk, Netherlands. Thereafter, he has enjoyed attending EBPS meetings and workshops on a regular basis.

The EBPS executive committee are grateful to have Mohammed’s scientific experience and his exuberant character that will ensure EBPS will continue to flourish both financially and scientifically.

Website: https://bit.ly/2SZt5iN
Email: mohammed.shoaib@newcastle.ac.uk

---

**EBPS Committee**

**Executive Committee:**
- President - John F Cryan (IE)
- President Elect - Louk Vanderschuren (NL)
- Past President - Terry Robinson (US)
- General Secretary - Shelly Flagel (US)
- Treasurer - Mohammed Shoaib (UK)
- Meeting Secretary - Nuno Sousa (PT)
- Past Meeting Secretary - George Panagis (GR)

**Ex-Officio:**
- Psychopharmacology Rep - Christelle Baunez (FR)
- Communications - Anand Gururajan (AU)

**Full Committee:**
- Committee Member - Daniele Caprioli (IT)
- Committee Member - T.J de Vries (NL)
- Committee Member - Veronique Deroche (FR)
- Committee Member - Michela Marinelli (US)
- Committee Member - Jennifer Murray (CA)
- Committee Member - Stefano Puglisi-Allegra (IT)
- Committee Member - Yavin Shaham (US)