



ALS Research Forum e-Newsletter Vol. 165

January 31, 2017

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Conference News

[Could Neurofilament Proteins Help Clinicians Diagnose ALS?](#)

The neurofilament protein pNfH may help clinicians differentially diagnose ALS according to new results presented at the ENCALs 2016 satellite meeting in Dublin, Ireland. The neuronal scaffolding protein is emerging as a potential biomarker for the diagnosis of ALS because its levels appear to be increased in patients with the disease. But according to some experts, the biggest potential of biomarkers such as pNfH might be its ability to stratify patients in clinical trials to evaluate therapeutic efficacy.

[ALS/MND 2016: New Findings in RNA Processing and Dysregulation](#)

New RNA-binding proteins implicated in ALS topped advances presented at the 27th International Symposium of ALS/MND in Dublin, Ireland. The RNA-binding proteins, identified with the help of IBM supercomputer Watson, included Syncrip (hnRNP Q), a protein that may help keep muscles and motor neurons connected by regulating the neuronal output of neuromuscular synapses. The loss of neuromuscular junction integrity is a key cause of muscle weakness and ultimately paralysis in the disease.

[Read more](#) insights into RNA dysregulation and ALS.

[ALS/MND 2016: Analyzing the Exposome: A New Approach to Finding Environmental Causes of ALS](#)

Researchers need to multitask to identify and evaluate environmental ALS risks factors according to the University of Utrecht's Roel Vermeulen. The strategy, known as exposome analysis, captures the total role of the environment in the disease. The approach is needed according to Vermeulen to understand how multiple environmental exposures and life choices may work together to contribute to the onset of ALS. The strategy, introduced by University of Manchester's Christopher Wild in the UK in 2005 to study cancer pathogenesis, differs from existing approaches in which environmental risk

factors are interrogated individually using epidemiological methods. Efforts to unravel the exposome in ALS are underway.

Boston Will Host ALS/MND in 2017

The 28th International Symposium on ALS/MND will be held in Boston in December 2017. The meeting will be hosted by the ALS Hope Foundation and the ALS Therapy Development Institute. The international meeting, organized by the Motor Neurone Disease Association in the UK, is the largest meeting focusing on ALS research and clinical management worldwide.

Research News

[Banking On ALS Risk](#)

A new genomic resource may help scientists identify and validate risk factors for ALS. The compendium, published in January 2017 in *Genomics Research*, includes exome sequencing and C9orf72 genotyping analysis of frozen brain tissue donated by families of more than 1450 patients with neurodegenerative diseases including 220 people with ALS/FTD. Clinical and pathological information is also available. The resource, developed by MRC's UK Brain Bank Network, also includes genomic analysis of more than 350 controls without significant neuropathology for evaluating potential genetic risk factors for the disease. [Read more>>](#)

[Forming FUS Droplets with a Flash of Light](#)

Researchers have a new technique in their toolbelt to study a key potential mechanism underlying ALS. The optogenetics technique, published last December in *Cell*, enables researchers with a flick of a blue light switch to reversibly aggregate ALS-linked RNA binding proteins *in vitro*. The approach according to some experts may help researchers investigate how stress granules may contribute to the disease.

Biotech and Pharma News

[ALS-Targeting Supercomputing Firm Adds CMO](#)

BenevolentBio named gastroenterologist Patrick Keohane chief medical officer this month. The London-based company disclosed last fall that ALS is in its sights, collaborating with University of Sheffield neuroscientists Laura Ferraiuolo and Richard Mead. BenevolentBio is using deep learning supercomputers to speed-read and analyze the scientific literature to identify targets and prioritize potential drugs to target them. The University of Sheffield team is currently evaluating two potential strategies for ALS at the preclinical stage. The company is the first artificial intelligence company to bring a chief medical officer on board. The move is a key sign that deep learning supercomputers may be beginning to cement its position in the healthcare arena. [Read more>>](#)

Funding Opportunities:

January 2017

NEW! [ALS Association Investigator-Initiated Starter and Multi-Year Research Grants](#). Abstracts due: January 31, 2017.

NEW! [The Milton Safenowitz Postdoctoral Fellowship](#). Abstracts due: January 31, 2017.

February 2017

NEW! [NYSCF Robertson Stem Cell Investigator Awards](#). Application due: February 22, 2017.

NEW! [NYSCF Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Awards](#). Application due: February 22, 2017.

March 2017

[MDA Venture Philanthropy \(MVP\) Program](#). LOI due: March 1, 2017.

[Target ALS Research Consortia](#). Applications are due by March 6, 2017.

NEW! [Pathways 2017](#). Multinational Research Consortia. EU Joint Programme - Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND). Applications are due by March 6, 2017.

NEW! [Identify and Characterize Potential Environmental Risk Factors for ALS and Evaluate Their Impact on ALS Disease Incidence and Progression](#). Applications are due by Mar 31, 2017.

[Full List of Funding Opportunities >>](#)

Job Opportunities:

[Assistant, Associate or Full Professor](#). University of California. Riverside, CA.

[Assistant Professor, Neuropsychology](#). University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, PA.

[Professor and Chair, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health](#). University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, PA.

[High-Throughput Screening Director](#). University of California. San Francisco, CA.

[Research Scientist](#). University of Chicago. Chicago, IL.

[Postdoctoral Fellow, Fisher Lab](#). MRC Harwell Institute. Oxfordshire, England.

[Postdoctoral Fellow, Neurogenetics](#). UMC Utrecht. Utrecht, Netherlands.

[Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Arizona](#). Phoenix, Arizona.

[Postdoctoral Fellow, Yang Lab](#). Tufts University School of Medicine. Boston, MA.

[Graduate Studentship, Neuroepidemiology](#). Karolinska Institutet. Stockholm, Sweden.

[Research Associate, Baloh Lab](#). Cedars Sinai Medical Center. Los Angeles, CA.

[Research Associate, Svendsen Lab](#). Cedars Sinai Medical Center. Los Angeles, CA.

[Genetic Counselor](#). Massachusetts General Hospital. Boston, MA.

[Director/Senior Director of Neurodegeneration and Repair Research](#). Biogen. Cambridge, MA.

[Scientist I/II, Translational Sciences](#). Biogen. Cambridge, MA.

[Associate Scientist II, Neuroimmunology](#). Biogen. Cambridge, MA.

Hiring someone onto your team? Contact us to add your listing to [our updated job board](#): ALSjobs@prize4life.org.

[Full List of Job Opportunities >>](#)

Upcoming Meetings:

February 2017

NEW! February 16-17, 2017. Munich, Germany. [23rd Meeting of the German Society for Muscular Disease \(DGM\)](#).

March 2017

NEW! March 2, 2017. London, England. [Motor Neurone Disease 2017](#).

NEW! March 4-5, 2017. Ventura, CA, USA. Gordon Research Conference: [Glial Biology: Functional Interactions Among Glia & Neurons](#). Abstracts Due: February 4, 2017.

March 23-26, 2017. Athens, Greece. [World Congress on Controversies in Neurology](#).

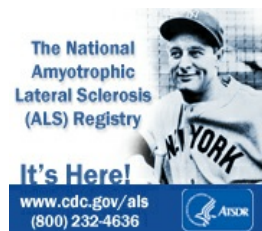
March 26-30, 2017. Sölden, Austria. [International Neuroscience Winter Conference](#). Abstracts Due: February 10, 2017.

June 2017

NEW! June 14-17, 2017. EMBL Heidelberg, Germany. EMBO-EMBL Symposium: [Mechanisms of Neurodegeneration](#). Abstracts Due: March 22, 2017.

Organizing an ALS meeting? Contact us to add your conference to [our updated calendar](#): ALSmeetings@prize4life.org.

[Full List of Upcoming Meetings>>](#)



[Download the Working with ALS Mice Manual Here](#)

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