**JUST A MINUTE…**

…Maria H Nilsson, who became Dr. Nilsson on Friday the 13th of November. She is the first physiotherapist in Sweden to become Ph.D. with specialization in Parkinson's disease.

**What have you done?**
- I have investigated how Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS, implantation of electrodes into the brain) affects functional balance performance, falls and fear of falling in people with Parkinson's disease. The method has proven very successful when it comes to reducing the symptoms in Parkinson's disease and the need of medication, but the effect on balance has so far been unknown.

**So what's the verdict?**
- When we test the patients without any treatment at all, neither with medication or the stimulation on, functional balance performance deteriorates over time. But three years after operation, the stimulation still gives a good effect when you turn it on and the functional balance performance is improved.

**So DBS affects balance performance in a positive way?**
- Balance is such a complex phenomenon, and there might be aspects that we haven't measured. But with the measures that I have used, there is nothing indicating that DBS in the subthalamic nucleus should impair balance performance. Furthermore, the patients estimate their trust in their own ability as higher when the stimulation is on. But further studies are needed.

**And will you be performing these further studies?**
- I applied for grant money from the Swedish Parkinson Academy for my doctoral studies, but also for starting other projects, mainly regarding balance and walking ability, so I will continue. In future studies I won't just involve DBS-operated patients. Only some persons with Parkinson's disease undergo operation, and I want to reach the masses. Maria H Nilsson's thesis is titled *Balance performance in people with Parkinson's disease. Effects of subthalamic Deep Brain Stimulation.*

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**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Deniz Kirik met the Minister for Research**

On November 11th, Deniz Kirik, together with the other recipients of the ERC Starting Grant, was honoured with a reception at the Swedish Research Council and a meeting with the Minister for Research, Tobias Krantz. Director General of the Swedish Research Council, Pär Omling, was also present at the reception.

Read more? Click here.

**New arrivals!**

Olof Torper is a new Ph.D. student from December 1st. He will use in utero electroporation to reprogram brain cells into dopaminergic neurons.

Laura Allan will become Bagadilico post-doc fellow in a project about stem cells and artificial biosurfaces which she will take over from Sine Rossen, who starts her parental leave tomorrow.

Welcome!

**Angela Cenci Nilsson gets money from Michael J Fox…**

Angela Cenci Nilsson gets 109 000 US dollars (about 778 000 Swedish kronor) from Michael J Fox Foundation.

The grant will be used for investigating the effects of l-dopa treatment on the blood vessels in the brain in Parkinson's disease.

Angela's group has previously gotten a grant from the foundation and the new grant will now be used for a continuation of the same project.

Read more? Click here.

**…Åsa Petersén gets money from Thure Carlsson…**

Åsa Petersén receives 200 000 Swedish kronor for research on Huntington's disease from the foundation Stiftelsen konsul Thure Carlssons Minne.

Read more? Click here.

**…Malin Parmar gets money from Jeanssons Stiftelser…**

Malin Parmar receives 150 000 kronor from Jeanssons Stiftelser for, by using a new technique, finding a combination of genes that programs the development of dopamine neurons. Read more? Click here.

**…and a whole lot of people get money from Fysiografen**

For those who like to count money, I salute you. Over half a million kronor comes to Bagadilico members from Fysiografen: Åsa Petersén 150 000 kronor, Maria Björkqvist 140 000, Tomas Deierborg 90 000, Lahouari Amar 75 000, Philip Gaughwin 17 000 and Gesine Paul 75 000 kronor. Gesine also got the same amount from two other foundations, Tore Nilsson Foundation and Anna Lisa och Sven-Eric Lundgrens Stiftelse, that is, 225 000 kronor in all.

Congratulations to everyone!
Employee of the month: Johan Jakobsson

Johan: the next generation

This was going to be a portrait of Johan Jakobsson, and at the same time an article about how you create your own research group. But that second part came to nothing, because it turns out that Johan has just been lucky.

Not only lucky of course. He has done a lot of hard work as well. But all the same, he’s been lucky.

– I’ve only done what I enjoyed doing, says Johan.

Ever since he was a kid, Johan has been interested in Biology. When he started studying in Lund he wanted to work with saving the environment. Something he soon gave up.

– Do you remember the ones that were environmentally interested when you studied Biology? The ones that listened to bats in the evenings? Well, having met them there was only one way to go, and that was into white Biology.

No letter of recommendation

Johan studied molecular neurobiology for Cecilia Lundberg and realized how fascinating the brain is. The realization that he wanted a career in research came during his postdoc in Switzerland.

– It was a very positive experience. I changed fields and it was exciting to try something new.

The Facts of Johan

| Family: Married, soon to become father (May 1st). | |
| This you didn’t know about Johan: He used to be in a rock band, named Nikita after the Formula One racing driver. And being born in Halmstad, of course there must be some connection to Roxette. “My ex-uncle by marriage was a member of Gyllene Tider. Per Gessle has phoned to my house.” |
| In ten years from now: “I hope I live in the Midwest, drive a fullsize car and wear cowboy boots.” | |

After two and a half years, Johan returned to Sweden.

– I wanted to look for other jobs, so I asked Anders Björklund for a letter of recommendation. But he wanted me to come back here instead. So he never gave me any letter of recommendation, Johan laughs.

From 2010 he will have his own research group, thanks to a grant from VR. His recipe for getting a career in science:

– Do a postdoc at the right university and publish in the right journals.

Sounds easy, right? Personally, however, he was far from that goal-oriented.

– The reason I ended up in Switzerland was that I wanted to test a lab with unlimited resources. While I was there, I did a little side project in epigenetics, and it ended up getting published in Neuron. A paper from the same project will also be published in Nature.

– The “easiest” way to get a position as a researcher is to do a postdoc in a lab where it’s possible to get a really good paper. Then you can apply for a position from VR, which gives you both your salary and resources for a long period of time.

Tough competition

Johan was shocked when he realized how tough the competition was.

– You might think you have a good chance, because you worked here and published papers. But everyone has done a Ph.D. and a postdoc. It’s easy to overestimate your CV.

– I’m telling you what I think is the best strategy. But if you ask someone else, they will tell you a different story.

When I ask Johan what he does outside the lab, he sighs. There isn’t really any spare time, as three out of five nights, he works until ten.

There is, however, a gastronomic association that he is member of. It is called “Husman” and practices the rare art of traditional Swedish homely fare (svensk husmanskost), with meetings Wednesday nights. A very odd project, considering that no one in Sweden eats Swedish food anymore.

– To qualify as husmanskost, a dish has to contain at least two of the three following ingredients: potatoes, pork, and lingonberry. And it has to be heavy and greasy.

Husman has now gone through 30 dishes and they’re starting to run out. The only ones left are the kind that takes whole days to prepare, like brown beans or stuffed cabbage rolls.

– They’re difficult to make on a Wednesday night. We might have to switch to Sundays.

Who do you think should be this newsletter’s Employee of the Month? E-mail me: christel.thunell@med.lu.se.

“I never turn out well in pictures”, says Johan Jakobsson. Anyway, this is what he looks like (kind of).