



Brain Awareness Week in Innsbruck: Fascinated by the Brain

The BAW has been successfully conducted in Western Austria since 1999. In 2018 the Medical University of Innsbruck participated in this international campaign with five lectures on brain-related topics organized for the public. Up to 350 attendants of all age groups participated per day and got engaged in vivid post-talk discussions. The international campaign aims to inspire interest in brain research and to bring attention to latest advancements in Neuroscience laboratories at Innsbruck. The activities were organized by Christine Bandtlow, Head of Division of Neurobiochemistry and Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations.

A special highlight was the last lecture on Friday about the importance of sleep for brain health. Birgit Högl (Neurology) gave the latest news. March 16, 2018 was also the “World Sleep Day”. This annual event intended to be a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects and driving. Herbert Riechelmann, director of the University Hospital for Otorhinolaryngology (ENT), gave a lecture on olfaction and how the sense of smell affects the brain. Werner Poewe, Professor of Neurology and an internationally renowned expert in movement disorders, took the public to a journey on news and progress on Parkinson disease, the second most common neurodegenerative disorder. He was optimistic that the search for reliable biomarkers of preclinical PD will aid in the early detection and differential diagnosis of parkinsonian disorders and in monitoring disease progression. Nicolas Singewald, neuropharmacologist and expert on fear and anxiety research at the University of Innsbruck, gave answers to the question, if and how meditation and yoga could modulate the brain’s stressful habits. While research is still building, Singewald notes that one potential reason might be yoga's big impact on dialing down chronic stress symptoms. A completely different topic, the huge potential of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) for application in regenerative brain medicine was covered by Frank Edenhofer.

Links:

Overview on the web: <https://www.i-med.ac.at/event/BAW2018.html>

Press conference & release (in german): <https://www.i-med.ac.at/pr/presse/2018/18.html>