

Introduction - 2020 & 2021 in words

by Leif Østergaard

I am proud and delighted to introduce the 2020-21 Center of Functionally Integrative Neuroscience (CFIN) biannual progress report on behalf of our dedicated researchers and staff. While 2020 and 2021 will be remembered for COVID-19 restrictions that kept us away from the labs where we do the experiments that are essential for our research, from everyday personal interactions that are critical for a healthy work environments, and from the informal discussions and sharing of ideas at in-person workshops and conferences that inspire new research, we also experienced an inflow of researchers, funding, and exciting new projects that bode well for neuroscience in the coming years.

In 2020, Francesca Fardo received DKK 11 million from the European Research Council (ERC) to establish her own group at CFIN and the Danish Pain Research Center. Francesca will study the computational neuroscience of illusory pain within the aim of improving future management of chronic pain. Meanwhile, Micah Allen's Embodied Computation Group received DKK 11 million from the ERC to study how cannabinoids influence the interaction between brain and body, with the aim of improving future therapeutic use of these compounds. Finally, Leif Østergaard received DKK 40 million from the Lundbeck Foundation Professorship program with the aim of understanding the relation between capillary function and brain oxygenation, and how capillary dysfunction contributes to dementia.

In 2021, Dmitry Postnov received DKK 10 million from the Lundbeck Foundation Fellowship program to establish his own group at CFIN. Dmitry develops novel technologies and computational methods to examine the microcirculation. He will use these approaches to study blood vessel changes in hypertension, and how such changes contribute to dementia.

While writing this report, we were thrilled to learn that Dan Bang, currently Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellow at the Wellcome Centre for Human Neuroimaging, University College London, received DKK 10 million from the Lundbeck Foundation Fellowship program to establish his own group at Aarhus University and Aarhus University Hospital from 2023. Stay tuned for more.

In 2021, the first drawings of a new Danish Neuroscience Center (DNC) materialized from a unique collaboration between the world famous Danish architect company Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), Aarhus University Hospital, and Aarhus University. Scheduled for inauguration in 2026/2027, DNC

will house CFIN, our sister center Music in the Brain (MIB), and our collaborators from neurology, psychiatry, PET-Center, neurosurgery, anesthesiology, and others.

Having written and published CFIN annual reports since 2006, we have decided to change the format into a newsletter covering news and events more continuously throughout the year. Therefore, this report – covering 2020 and 2021 – will be the last in a long row of CFIN Annual Reports. Stay tuned for more reports and news from CFINs many research groups as we launch this monthly newsletter.

All the previous CFIN Annual Reports can be found at the CFIN website:

<https://cfin.au.dk/about-cfin/cfin-annual-reports>

With our warmest thanks for your collaboration, interest and support – and our best wishes,

Leif Østergaard
CFIN director

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During the Covid-19 pandemic CFIN was closed down and all employees worked from home. Our buildings had to live up to new rules and regulations, so we had quite a job of making these visible for all employees and visitors.
Photos: Vibeke Sauer Panyella