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Raising awareness of the brain

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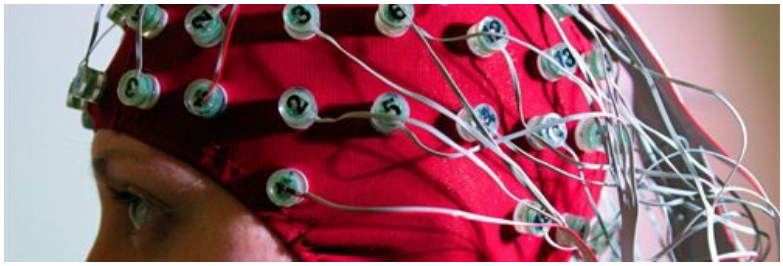

With Alzheimer's and stroke high on the list of national health concerns, it is becoming ever more important to understand how the brain works, in health and in disease. Top scientists and students from across the University of Birmingham are organising a series of events to engage public understanding of neuroscience, demonstrating the breadth and depth of brain expertise on campus, whilst making the research accessible to the general public for Brain Awareness Week.

Every March, this global campaign unites the efforts of universities, hospitals, patient groups, government agencies, schools, service organisations, and professional associates worldwide, to increase awareness of the progress and benefits of neurological research in a week-long celebration of the brain, which this year takes place between 12-18 March 2012.

A series of public lectures will be delivered by members of the University's research teams and exhibited artists at the mac's 'Arts for the Brain' exhibition on a variety of themes, including what the latest advances in brain imaging studies reveal about the mechanisms and brain regions activated during performance of artistic tasks.

Event organiser, Dr Emil Toescu, a Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience at the School of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, commented:

"Every year, the events of Brain Awareness Week prove so popular with members of the public. There is so much interest in neurosciences – with children at thinktank having the opportunity to meet scientists, with students at schools engaging with academics and with the general public taking part in the various lectures. I am so pleased that so many of the neuroscientists at the University of Birmingham, from academics to undergraduate students are involved this year; the workings of the brain never stop being fascinating."

Teams of neuroscientists will also be visiting local secondary schools and delivering lunchtime presentations on a variety of neuroscience projects aimed at captivating the next generation of scientists and a separate 'Meet the Scientist' event will take place at thinktank, Birmingham, allowing for a more direct and fun experience of what science is.

The week-long celebration will culminate with the world premiere of a Student's Café Scientifique, taking place at the Guild of students on Sunday 18 March entitled, 'The Brain of Artificial Intelligence' led by three students who will propose navigating a path from biological brain to behaviour and further to artificial intelligence and robotic activity.

National Brain Awareness Week is taking place from 12-18 March 2012, and all the events are free to all public. The mac's 'Arts for the Brain' exhibition at Canon Hill Park is open from 12-25 March showcasing a variety of work of art produced by people who have been diagnosed and are suffering from neurodegenerative diseases, and illustrating the important role that creative art can play in recovery and rehabilitation.

For more information, on location of events, and times please visit the University's **Brain Awareness Week website (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/community/brain-awareness-week.aspx)** .

See full Brain Awareness Week press release (/news/latest/2012/03/13MarBrain-Awareness-Week-Press-Release.aspx)

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