



The awardees of the FKNE Mentoring and PhD Thesis Prizes 2020 have been announced

The FENS-Kavli Network of Excellence awards have been presented at the FENS 2020 Virtual Forum

Professor Avishai Henik (University of Ben-Gurion University of The Negev, Israel) has been awarded the FENS-Kavli Network of Excellence Mentoring Prize for his outstanding contributions in facilitating the careers of neuroscientists in Europe. With this prize, the FENS-Kavli Scholars recognise the essential role of mentoring in building up a successful, healthy and innovative neuroscience community. They believe that mentoring facilitates both neuroscientists' careers and scientific progress.

19 nominations came in from across Europe, all demonstrating an inspiring commitment to mentoring. Prof. Henik was nominated by current and former colleagues for going above and beyond in his efforts to teach and champion researchers. Professor Henik listens to his students, their needs, difficulties and suggestions and treats them all as equal team members. He induces enthusiasm and confidence in his students and postdocs and is able to bring the best in any of his mentees. Professor Henik aims at building a lab where all help each other and create a social atmosphere where people can see that science is fun, interesting and enjoyable.

- [View here](#) the video featuring the awardee of the FKNE Mentoring Prize 2020

Dr. Lisa Traunmüller has been awarded the inaugural FENS-Kavli Network of Excellence PhD Thesis Prize. She conducted her PhD project in the lab of Dr. Peter Scheiffele at Biozentrum, University of Basel, Switzerland and addressed a fundamental question in neurobiology: What are the mechanisms that create different, highly specific types of synapses? Her work uncovered an RNA-binding protein which activates a highly specific alternative splicing program to control the properties of glutamatergic synapses. She also contributed to work that uncovers how a switch in alternative splicing shapes neurexin repertoires in principal neurons versus interneurons of the hippocampus. Taken together, her work identified the cell type-specific transcript diversification by alternative splicing as a novel and central mechanism for the functional specification of neuronal cell types and circuits. Dr. Traunmüller's work was published in influential journals and is highly recognised for having a strong impact on the field of neuronal circuit assembly and synapse formation. Therefore, the jury was delighted to select Dr. Traunmüller as the winner out of 56 applicants, many of which were also outstanding.

- [View here](#) the video featuring the awardee of the FKNE PhD Prize 2020

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