



BBC newsletter n° 38 March 2021-EN

EDITO par Charles van der Straten Waillet

Impact of COVID-19 on physical and mental health

The advancing medical world, the evolving political world, and the patients who recovered from this daunting infectious disease have the opportunity to get a better understanding of the Sars-CoV-2 virus. The statistic illustrated that more than 22000 people died because of the fatal COVID-19. However, tens of thousands of people were almost cured and survived, fortunately.

“Almost cured” accurately indicates that the side-effect of COVID-19 is inevitable even after recovery. 25% of those (of all ages) infected by the virus and recovered later still suffer from the downright terrifying symptoms of the COVID-19: severe fatigue, terrible tachypnoea, chest tightness, indigestion, insomnia, and distraction.

The COVID-19, not only detracts the patients who have been infected straightforwardly, but also poses threat to those who have not been infected. Specifically, the physical and mental health of dedicated caregivers, front-line nurses, and professional doctors have drastically deteriorated. Social distancing and radical confinement hugely disrupt the mental health of the population, which further burdening the health system provided for neurological and psychiatric patients.

The direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 is widely acknowledged. The high-profile leaders from several countries, the national and international scientific authorities gather together to analyze, explore and take effective measures to combat the long-lasting consequences. As a platform bringing together scientists, patient associations, and industry representatives, the Belgian Brain Council (BBC) play a functional role as a “whistleblower”.

Currently, many important and confusing questions remain unanswered or at the level of assumptions. It is expected that by September 2021 the forward-looking perspectives would answer the following questions:

- What do we know about COVID-19?*
- What are the opinions of patients who suffer from COVID-19?*
- What is the impact of COVID-19 on the human being, on the health sector and policy, and the economy?*
- What consequences does the COVID pandemic have for the mental health of Belgians? And which age groups have a higher tendency to be affected?*
- How the care received by neurological and psychiatric patients changed due to the daunting pandemic?*
- Will a multidisciplinary strategy including medical, human, and economic sciences be needed to plummet the negative impact both during the pandemic and beyond?*

The 90-minute session officially organized by the BBC Webinar on September 11, 2021 will include the panel discussion consisted of high-profile scientific presentations and patient testimonials, which shed a spotlight on the solution to these questions.

Living with a brain tumor: my body is balancing between cancer and neurological disease

By Lia Le Roy (Hersentumoren) and Bieke Lefevere (Harvey Cushing Center, hugely grateful for her valuable contribution)

Your life changes drastically when you are diagnosed with a "brain tumor" At the multidisciplinary oncology consultation, the chopper falls and the endless nightmares come to a close: surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy, all of which require a compulsory one-week stay in hospital. In the hospital, everything usually goes smoothly and follows the routine. You can wash and dress, sometimes with a little support because one arm is not able to coordinate. You can even take a short stroll along the hall, or even go for a walk in the corridor. You need abundant sleep which is normal after head surgery. You can easily move from bed to the toilet. Eating is not a problem either because of the well-prepared and nutritious meals. After hospitalization, you are surrounded by your beloved families who hereby empower and support you. The breakfast is prepared in the morning. However, you bear the inevitable fatigue for what you' ve been through. The children go to school and your partner commute to work as usual, what you can do is to clear the table and prepare for the next meal since you are the only one who stays at home. Nevertheless, it is desperate to find that these trivial daily routines seem to be not as simple as before. The consequences of the diseases are the fading of memory, the distraction, and the tendency to get tired easily.

It will take some time until you realize that the detrimental neurological problems stem from the tumor itself. The tension is filled in your family when your relatives and children also realize the difference. Eventually, you make up your mind to turn to doctors. However, the ruthless truth hit your expectations back. The question of "who do you turn to" is encountered. The oncologist? No, it' s neurological problems. The neurologist? It's essentially cancer. Psychologist? No, they are not specialists for neurological treatments. Psychologists won' t save you because you are not trapped in depression. It is essential to offer neurological rehabilitation and customized psychological support, even in the case of mild neurological symptoms. The referral to a rehabilitation center is desperately needed for patients with severe problems. The patients receive appropriate therapy in the rehabilitation center, but the vast majority do not find adequate outpatient treatment. Fortunately, professionally trained psychologists are accessible in many hospitals. Belgian Brain Council commits to delivering psychological support for patients via local associations. The HCC endeavors to provide psychological support to the patients and their family members, especially in Brussels and the surrounding area. The patient associations Can Cé-Tu, ASBL dominantly in Wallonia, and Werkgroep Hersentumoren vzw mainly in Flanders are used to develop solutions that help meet patient needs and drive better outcomes. These three associations are members of the Belgian Brain Council. In addition to psychological support, appropriate cognitive and/or motor rehabilitation is also crucial and indispensable. Detecting and tracking neurological problems sufficiently has not been fully realized because of the long waiting lists, the limitation of available places, and the absence of neuropsychological tests. Nevertheless, a rigorous neuropsychological evaluation is essential for diagnosis and early treatment. The time-consuming and expensive medical evaluation, the lack of qualified personnel, the unmet needs of patients in long waiting lists, and the scarcity of outpatient care centers give birth to the patients' associations such as the Werkgroep Hersentumoren, Can Cé-Tu, and the Harvey Cushing Center. These dedicated organizations, alongside the BBC and the Hersenletselliga (formerly NAH Liga - Brain Injury League), have taken the initiative proactively to advocate for better reimbursement and formal recognition of neuropsychological diagnoses that are necessary for the rehabilitation and psychological support of quality. On this subject, the advice of the Chronic Disease Observatory has been produced with the support of the Vlaamse Patiëntenplatform (an association similar to the LUSS), targeting all patients with a neurological disease, whether degenerative or not. Thus, our lobby group advocates for the coverage and reimbursement of neuropsychological tests and the recognition of neuropsychologists, a specialization within clinical psychologists. This is a long-term and harsh task which can be proved by the following observation: In 1978, my friend who graduated as a clinical psychologist told me

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that "Every hospital will have to employ a clinical psychologist within in a few years". The authentic truth is... It took approximately 40 years for the existence of clinical psychologists.

BBC WEBINAR 2021

11/09/2021 10:00 -11:30

Impact de COVID-19 sur les troubles du cerveau et la santé mentale

Effect van COVID-19 op hersenaandoeningen en geestelijke gezondheid

WEBINAR 2021 Programme provisoire

Online connexion: The webinar will be bilingual FR/NL with 3 channels (one FR, one NL and one without translation) , interactive using Slido² et conduit par Vanessa Costanzo

Introduction

- Pr. Patrice Boyer, Psychiatrist, European Brain Council vice-president³

Session 1: Impact of COVID-19 on mental health in the general population

- Impact of the covid-19 pandemic on mental health in youths.

Pr. Fabienne Glowacz (ULiège), Psychologist -Service de psychologie Clinique de la délinquance.

- Mental health during the covid-19 pandemic and beyond: the importance of the vagus nerve for biopsychosocial resilience.

Dr. Marie-Anne Vanderhassel (UGent), Psychologist - Department of Head and Skin

Debate 1 + Q/A (on line)

Session 2: Impact of COVID-19 on patients

- Cognitive consequences in non-geriatric patients after a long stay in intensive care following COVID-19

Dr. Hichem Slama (ULB), Psychologist - Department of Clinical and Cognitive Neuropsychology

- Impact of the covid-19 pandemic on patients suffering from neurological or psychiatric disorders?

- Testimony by Patients (video) and representative of Patients' associations

Eline Bruneel (Vlaamse Patienten Platfom)

¹https://www.inami.fgov.be/SiteCollectionDocuments/adviezen_observatorium_chronische_ziekten_2020_05.pdf et

https://www.inami.fgov.be/SiteCollectionDocuments/avis_observatoire_maladie_chronique_2020_05.pdf

² Slido est une application de questions-réponses et de sondages facile à utiliser qui transformera vos auditeurs silencieux en participants engagés.

³ <https://www.braincouncil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/EBC-COVID-19-Statement-Final.pdf>

- The neurobiological basis of covid-19-induced long-lasting neurological symptoms.
Prof Paul Boon (UZGent), Neurologist – Department of Neurology
- Therapeutic perspectives for the “long-covid” syndrome
Pr. Paul Verbanck (ULB), Psychiatrist – Department of Psychiatry

Debate 2 + Q/A (on line) with Federal Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke (tbc)
Supported by



BBC et Brain Awareness Week



Brain Week (BAW) is a global campaign that aims to generate public enthusiasm and enormous support for brain science. The BBC, alongside the support of the Leuven Brain Institute, Defence, the platform Sciences. be (the University of Liège, MUMONS of the University of Mons, UNamur, and ULB) and the epic (Ensemble pour le cerveau) ensure that the events received public engagement and wide attendance.



3. 2021 activities

Brain Awareness Week 15-21 March 2021

Cf list of events: <https://braincouncil.be/belgian-baw-events-2021>

Science Show : Le cerveau au service des apprentissages 330 vues • Diffusé il y a 1 jour	De l'intelligence humaine à l'intelligence artificielle ? 723 vues • Diffusé il y a 2 jours	Comment l'IA transforme-t-elle l'éducation ? 724 vues • Diffusé il y a 3 jours	De l'animal à l'homme : mieux comprendre nos... 832 vues • Diffusé il y a 4 jours

Café des sciences "Cerveau"

105 watching now • Started streaming 25 minutes ago





Café des sciences "Cerveau"
90 watching now · Started streaming 44 minutes ago



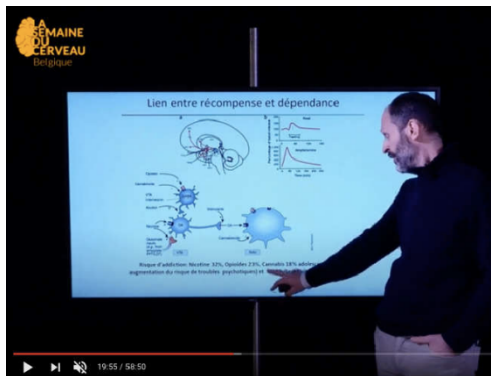
Après-midi scolaire sur le cerveau : dissection
202 watching now · Started streaming 10 minutes ago



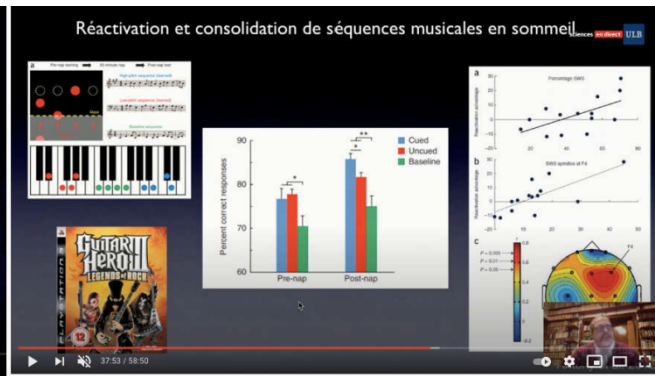
Hartcoherentie ?

"Een staat van fysiologisch, fysiek, mentaal en emotioneel evenwicht, waardoor een herbronning, focus en versterking optreedt op elk van deze domeinen"

Dr David O'Hare



Le cerveau au travail : sommeil et dépendance
75 views · Streamed live 12 hours ago



Le cerveau au travail : sommeil et dépendance
75 views · Streamed live 12 hours ago

KU LEUVEN

LEUVEN BRAIN INSTITUTE PRESENTEERT

BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK 2021

2 online lezingen op 16 en 18 maart, 19u

"Ouder en wijzer? Over (ab)normale cognitieve veroudering"
Door Prof. Dr. Rose Bruffaerts, neuroloog in UZ Leuven en professor neurowetenschappen aan de UHasselt

"Wat kan jouw bloed je vertellen over je hersenen en zenuwen?"
Door Prof. Dr. Koen Poesen, specialist in de klinische biologie aan het UZ Leuven, en professor aan de KU Leuven

1 online kinder workshop op 20 maart, 14u

#TheSmellChallenge "Hoeveel geuren kan jij herkennen?"
Door Dr. Ann Van der Jeugd, onderzoekster en program manager aan het Leuven Brain Institute aan de KU Leuven

REGISTREER JOUW AANWEZIGHEID HIER OF SCAN DE CODE

KU LEUVEN

Ouder en wijzer? Over (ab)normale cognitieve veroudering

Prof. Dr. Rose Bruffaerts, KU/UZ Leuven & UHasselt
Leuven Brain Institute (LBI) – Brain Awareness Week 2021

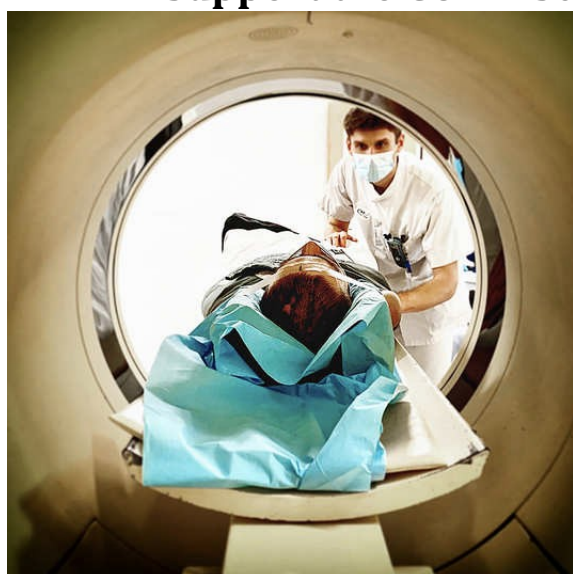


News from our members

The Belgian Stroke Council issued a press release on March 19 about vaccination and stroke

Le Belgian Stroke Council soutient la stratégie actuelle de vaccination en Belgique qui est basée sur la nécessité de protection maximale de la population contre la pandémie COVID19. Toute inquiétude concernant l'augmentation du risque de thrombose est prise en compte par les autorités sanitaires belges et européennes compétentes, mais ne doit pas avoir d'impact négatif sur le programme de vaccination en cours. Nous encourageons tous nos patients victimes d'un accident vasculaire cérébral (AVC) à se faire vacciner contre l'infection potentiellement grave du COVID, conformément à la communication de l'Agence européenne des médicaments (EMA), de la Société internationale de thrombose et d'hémostase (ISTH) et du gouvernement Belge.

Support the COMA Science Group and vote for their photos



This group recently submitted a photo to the King Baudouin Foundation photo contest. This photo was taken during a PET scan of the brain to quantify the level of metabolic activity in the brain of a young brain-injured patient. This photo was selected among the 16 finalists (among 1000 photos in competition) by the jury, and the grand winner was chosen by the public votes. It is fantastic to the occasion of Brain Week. This photo highlights the importance of management for patients with a brain injury and illustrates a neuroimaging tool that can probe its activity. The COMA Science Group, therefore, sincerely motivates you to support this group by voting. These three platforms are in charge of counting votes:

1.The website of the foundation (our photo is photo 4)

<https://www.kbs-frb.be/fr/PhotoCompetition>

2.The number of "likes" on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Fondation.Roi.Baudouin/photos/pcb.3607293646063202/3607278376064729>

3.The number of "likes" on the Instagram photo : https://www.instagram.com/p/CMUPKf5ob_w/

If you are interested in our activities, please support the BBC and become a member



Autres infos

7th National Brain Councils Academy

- Save the date : APRIL 15

Under the umbrella of the European Brain Council : a 1h30 min webinar dedicate to the role of NBCs within the HERA (European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority) project. Programme, invitation and registration to be communicated by EBC

Share4Brain

For memory, this Erasmus+ project is coordinated by the Belgian Brain Council (BE) with 4 other partners from Spain, Greece and Serbia

- Prolongation until May 31, 2022
- Enrollement of Valentina Di Micco as EU4EU trainee for 6 months
- Obtained a score of good for its mid-term evaluation (see evaluation sheet at <https://braincouncil.be/en/erasmus/share4brain/share4brain-mid-term-evaluation>)

New Erasmus+ Projects

Within the new Erasmus+ call of May 2021 dealing with education of adults, BBC will be partner within 2 projects (one on Parkinson and the second on Autism).

BBC communication, dissemination tools

Since Jan 1 the BBC WEB page statistics (source google analytics) are: 1.482 sessions, 1.036 users and 5.693 page views and for our @BelgianCouncil tweet we have on March 23 1.134 followers

Professor Florence Ris will hold the Presidency of the BBC until the next General Assembly

Reminder to members: The BBC offers great opportunity to members who wish to organize online meetings by leveraging GoToMeeting. Contact: R.Pochet

**Tools for our members to utilize for any advocacy efforts:
Evidence on the exceptionally high burden of brain disorders of
https://braincouncil.be/en/burden-of-brain-diseases_evidence**

Dates to remember (please find more details at braincouncil.be)

15 April	7th National Brain Councils Academy
27 April	BBC Executive Committee
18 May	BBC General Meeting
30 May	World Multiple Sclerosis Day
5 June	Charcot Foundation-MS Symposium
June	Leuven BASS spring meeting
11 September	BBC WEBINAR