

CONNECTING YOUNG MINDS WITH THE FRONTIERS OF NEUROSCIENCE

As part of the Horizon Europe-funded **GEMSTONE Project**, Acıbadem Mehmet Ali Aydınlar University (ACU) is proud to host its inaugural neuroscience day, **ACU NeuroConnect**. This one-day outreach and dissemination event is specially designed to inspire the future neuroscientists by opening a window into the exciting and rapidly evolving world of brain science.

Organized in collaboration with **ACU Medical School Scientific Research Society**, **ACU Neuroscience Student Club**, **ACU Department of Neuroscience**, and **ACU Neuroscience Student Research Group**, the event aims to engage youth audiences while showcasing ACU's strengths in neuroscience, the GEMSTONE Project's goals of research excellence, innovation, and outreach, and its commitment to capacity building in the research of neurodevelopmental disorders as well as institutional research support services.

DATE	VENUE	FOLLOW
Saturday 15 November 2025 08:00–18:00	Conference Hall ACU Kerem Aydınlar Campus İçerenköy Mah. Kayışdağı Cad. No: 32 34752 Ataşehir, İstanbul	For updates, please follow us on social media: Instagram @acu_neuroconnect LinkedIn @acu-neuroconnect

NOTES

- Event materials will be distributed at the registration desk. Stocks are limited.
- All participants will be provided with refreshments and lunch during the event.
- Registration starts at 08:00. Please ensure punctuality to help us keep the event on schedule.
- Poster presenters should arrive at 08:00 sharp to place their posters.
- For any questions or problems, please contact: **acuneuroconnect@gmail.com**

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

GEMSTONE Project	ACUTBAT	ACU Neuroscience Student Club	ACU Neuroscience PhD Students	ACU Neuroscience Student Research Group
Prof. Filiz Onat Prof. Levent Altıntaş Dr. Oğuzhan Altınozk Cem Öztürk Merve Çavuş	Sonnur Kaya Doğukan Türkkkan Deniz Alp Reçber Berke Can Dağdelen Aslı Burcu Gül Kerem Akar	Berrin Kater Betül İrem Göksu Elif Demir Azra Nisa Çınar Azra Özkan	Berk Can Kantarcı İrem Keçeci Semih Doğukan Ağır Ahmet Şanlı Fatma Şahin Ceren Çelik Nursima Mutlu	Ömer Şaka Bekir Arda Yıldırım Ömer Demir Ada Deniz Engin Murat Aydın Pelin İpekoğlu



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PROGRAMME

WELCOME

08:00–09:00 **Registration**
60 min

09:00–09:20 **Opening Ceremony [In Turkish]**
20 min
Prof. Filiz Onat, GEMSTONE Primary Principal Investigator, Acıbadem University
Prof. Güldal Süyen, Vice-Rector & GEMSTONE Researcher, Acıbadem University
Prof. Ahmet Şahin, Rector, Acıbadem University
Hatice Seher Aydınlar, President, Kerem Aydınlar Foundation

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Chaired by: Prof. Beki Kan, GEMSTONE WP5 Leader, Acıbadem University

09:20–10:00 **Implementation of Binary Recombinase Systems for Conditional Gene Activation in the Midbrain Dopamine System**
40 min
Prof. Deniz Kırık, GEMSTONE Local Principal Investigator, Lund University

FEATURED TALKS

Chaired by: Prof. Betül Baykan Baykal, Istanbul University

10:00–10:30 **Astrocyte Calcium Signalling as a Compensatory Mechanism against Neuroinflammation in Parkinson's Disease**
30 min
Assist. Prof. Evangelia Emmanouilidou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

10:30–11:00 **Lessons Learned from Studying Rare Neurological Diseases**
30 min
Dr. Rauan Kaiyrzhanov, University College London

11:00–11:30 **Coffee Break: Refreshments & Side Activities**
30 min



LIGHTNING TALKS

Co-chaired by: Prof. Çiğdem Özkara, Istanbul University – Cerrahpaşa
& Assoc. Prof. Ayşe Melike Şahiner, GEMSTONE WP4 Leader, Acibadem University

- 11:30–11:50
20 min **Parkin Gene Delivery and Alpha-Synuclein Pathology: An Animal Model to Study Parkinson's Disease**
Dr. Courtney J. Wright, GEMSTONE Researcher, Lund University
- 11:50–12:10
20 min **Bidirectional Control of Generalized Absence Epilepsy Networks Using Optogenetics**
Olivér Nagy, PhD(c), University of Szeged
- 12:10–12:30
20 min **Mitochondrial Alterations in Alzheimer's Disease: Linking Brain and Peripheral Blood in the 5xFAD Mouse**
Assist. Prof. Elif Nedret Keskinöz, GEMSTONE Researcher, Acibadem University
- 12:30–12:50
20 min **Investigating the Origin of Alpha-Synuclein in the Body Using Genetically Engineered Mice**
Talat Taygun Turan, MD, PhD(c), GEMSTONE Research Assistant, Acibadem University
- 12:50–13:10
20 min **Behavioural and Cognitive Functions of Zebrafish**
Ekin Döngel Dayanç, MD, PhD(c), Acibadem University
- 13:10–14:10
60 min **Group Photo & Lunch Break**

POSTER WALK

- 14:10–15:00
50 min **Poster Walk & Side Activities**

INSIGHT PANEL

Co-chaired by: Prof. Devrim Öz Arslan, GEMSTONE Researcher, Acibadem University
& Assoc. Prof. My Andersson, GEMSTONE Researcher, Lund University

- 15:00–16:10
70 min **Meet the Young Neuroscientists**
Merve Çavuş, Pharmacology PhD(c), GEMSTONE Research Assistant, Acibadem University
Nursima Mutlu, Neuroscience PhD Student, GEMSTONE Research Assistant, Acibadem University
Ömer Şaka, Medical School Year 4 Student, Acibadem University
Ömer Demir, Medical School Year 4 Student, Acibadem University
Bekir Arda Yıldırım, Medical School Year 4 Student, Acibadem University
Ceren Çelik, Neuroscience PhD Student, Acibadem University



LUND
UNIVERSITY



ACIBADEM
UNIVERSITY

ICONS

16:10–16:30 **Coffee Break: Refreshments & Side Activities**
20 min

CAREERS PANEL

Co-chaired by: Prof. Filiz Onat, GEMSTONE Primary Principal Investigator, Acıbadem University & Assoc. Prof. Nihan Çarçak Yılmaz, GEMSTONE WP2 Leader, Acıbadem University & Assist. Prof. Tuğba Eryiğit Karamahmutoğlu, Marmara University

16:30–17:10 **Career Pathways in Neuroscience [In Turkish]**
40 min

Assoc. Prof. Mustafa Aykut Kural, Acıbadem Altunizade Hospital & Acıbadem University
Assoc. Prof. Tuba Cerrahoğlu Şirin, Şişli Hamidiye Etfal Training and Research Hospital
Assoc. Prof. Fatih Özdener, Farmakon Research and Consultancy & Acıbadem University

OPEN DISCUSSION

Co-chaired by: Serena Cogoni, GEMSTONE Local Principal Investigator, ICONS & Cem Öztürk, GEMSTONE Project Manager, Acıbadem University

17:10–17:50 **Goals and Obstacles Facing Neuroscientists of Today**
40 min

Prof. Filiz Onat, Prof. Deniz Kırık, Assoc. Prof. Fatih Özdener,
Assoc. Prof. Mustafa Aykut Kural, Assoc. Prof. Tuba Cerrahoğlu Şirin,
Assist. Prof. Evangelia Emmanouilidou, Dr. Rauan Kaiyrzhanov

FAREWELL

17:50–18:00 **Poster Award & Closing Ceremony**
10 min

SIDE ACTIVITIES

POSTER WALK

Viewed after the lunch in the Foyer, with peer-voted awards – voluntary summer internship opportunity at ACU Neuroepilepsy Lab under the supervision of Prof. Onat for the Best Poster

INFO BOOTHS

GEMSTONE Project, ACUTBAT, ACU Neuroscience Student Club, and ACU Neuroscience PhD Programme info desks, viewed during breaks in the Foyer

BRAIN CANVAS

“What does the brain mean to you?” – share your thoughts, feelings, and creativity on our Brain Canvas in the Foyer, turning collective reflections into a vibrant work of art

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