

Vitamin D and Mental Health Symposium and the *Erik Strömngren Lecture*

This year the Erik Strömngren Lecture will be part of a Symposium on Vitamin D and Mental Health. We will be joined by leading researchers from Denmark, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Professor John McGrath, recently appointed Niels Bohr Professor at the National Centre for Register-based Research, Aarhus University, will be giving the 2017 Erik Strömngren Lecture.

Please join us for this important event.

- Date:** Wednesday 15th November 2017
- Time:** 13.00- 17.00
- Venue:** Aarhus University Hospital Risskov, Skovagervej 2, 8240 Risskov Auditorium, Entrance 30 (*see below for map*)
- Hosted by:** Erik Strömngren Foundation and the Niels Bohr Professorship, Aarhus University.
- Registration:** <https://auws.au.dk/default.aspx?id=34287> *Deadline 10th November 2017*

PROGRAM

- 13.00 - 13.30 **Vitamin D deficiency in Denmark**
Professor Lars Rejnmark, Aarhus University
- 13.30 - 14.00 **Vitamin D deficiency in mental health**
Dr Fiona Gaughran, King's College London
- 14.00 - 14.30 **Vitamin D and the ontogeny of Dopamine systems: Implications for schizophrenia**
Professor Darryl Eyles, Queensland Brain Institute
- 14.30 – 15.00 Coffee break
- 15.00 - 16.00 **Erik Strömngren Lecture: Prenatal vitamin D deficiency and risk of neurodevelopmental disorders**
Professor John McGrath, Queensland Brain Institute
- 16.00 - 17.00 Reception

Celebrating the Niels Bohr Professorship

The Strömngren Symposium 2017 also celebrates that Professor John McGrath has received a five-year Niels Bohr Professorship hosted by the National Centre for Register-based Research (NCRR) at Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences, Aarhus University. The grant of 30 million DKK from the Danish National Research Foundation enables Professor John McGrath and his colleagues at NCRR to follow up on their recent research linking vitamin D deficiency in the foetal age with mental disorders such as schizophrenia. In addition the Niels Bohr Professorship also aims to build partnerships between NCRR and some of the most highly skilled research centres in the world and to develop new methods in order to explore burdens of mental disorders in Denmark.

“It is a great honour to be awarded the Erik Strömngren Medal – it is a top international award which is very prestigious in our field. Many of the greatest names in psychiatric research have been awarded the Medal. It has been a great privilege to work closely with Danish colleagues over the last 20 years, and I look forward to spending more time in Denmark over the next 5 years,” says John McGrath, who will commute between Aarhus University and Brisbane while being a Niels Bohr Professor.

The 2017 Erik Strömngren Lecture and “Vitamin D and Mental Health Symposium”

The Strömngren Symposium also gives Danish psychiatrists and other interested parties the opportunity to meet and learn about novel and remarkable science in modern psychiatry. This year Professor John McGrath will deliver his Erik Strömngren lecture as part of a symposium “Vitamin D and mental health”.

“This will be a great opportunity to summarize the current knowledge about the role of vitamin D and mental health. We are delighted that distinguished vitamin D researchers from Denmark, Australia and the UK can join us for this day. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on many years of vitamin D research, done in close collaboration with my colleagues in Denmark,” says John McGrath.

At the symposium, Professor Lars Rejnmark from Aarhus University will give an introduction to vitamin D and outline the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in Denmark. Dr. Fiona Gaughran from King’s College London will present her research on the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency in patients with mental disorders. Professor Darryl Eyles from the University of Queensland will outline the evidence from animal models linking vitamin D to healthy brain development. Finally, Professor John McGrath will give his Erik Strömngren Lecture: *Prenatal vitamin D deficiency and risk of neurodevelopmental disorders*.



Professor Erik Strömngren

Erik Strömngren was born on 28th of November 1909 in Copenhagen to Swedish parents. From the age of 17 he studied medicine at the University of Copenhagen. In 1945 Erik Strömngren became professor in psychiatry at Aarhus University and chief physician at the Psychiatric Hospital in Risskov. Erik Strömngren worked at the Psychiatric Hospital in Aarhus from 1945 to 1979. He was a clinician who took great care for the mentally ill and is known for his effort to raise psychiatric research to the same level as other areas in medicine – not only in Denmark but also internationally. At his retirement Erik Strömngren accepted that a memorial plaque was set up in the hospital auditorium, with only his name, dates, and four titles that reflect his major areas of interest: physician, teacher, researcher, and planner. He is remembered by the Erik Strömngren lecture and medal which is awarded to internationally distinguished psychiatric researchers. The Strömngren Medal displays a miniature of the memorial plaque.



John McGrath is a psychiatrist interested in discovering the causes of serious mental disorders. He is the Director of the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research and conjoint Professor at the Queensland Brain Institute. His research aims to generate and evaluate non-genetic risk factors for schizophrenia. He has forged productive cross-disciplinary collaborations linking risk factor epidemiology with developmental neurobiology. For example, John and his colleagues have made discoveries linking prenatal vitamin D and later risk of mental illness in the offspring. In addition, John has supervised major systematic reviews of the epidemiology of schizophrenia. He has published over 400 peer-reviewed articles and 25 book chapters. He is one of Australia's most highly cited mental health researchers. He was awarded a John Cade Fellowship by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council. In 2016 he was also awarded a Niels Bohr Professorship by the Danish National Research Foundation.



Lars Rejnmark is professor in endocrinology at Aarhus University. His research deals with disturbances in metabolism and rare diseases. Bone fatigue, muscle weakness and cardiovascular disease can be caused by metabolic disturbances. With his research, Lars Rejnmark has shown that vitamin D can reduce the risk of fractures and increase life expectancy. This is new and important knowledge for many Danes who receive too little vitamin D, despite having a high standard of living. At the Strömngren Symposium he will give a lecture on *Vitamin D deficiency in Denmark*.



Fiona Gaughran is clinical researcher at King's College London. Dr Gaughran has a particular interest in translating research into clinical practice, and over the years she has secured substantial research grant income to support this work. Her current research interests are largely focused on the interface between physical health and severe mental illness and on the management of treatment-resistant psychosis. At the Strömngren Symposium 2017 she will give a lecture on *Vitamin D and psychosis*.



Darryl Eyles is head of the Neurobiology stream within the Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research and conjoint Professor at the Queensland Brain Institute.. Much of his previous research focuses on the effects of developmental vitamin D deficiency on brain development. He developed the 1st assay for vitamin D based on stored dried neonatal blood samples. Darryl also pioneered the use of animal models to explore the impact of vitamin D on brain development. Evidence from both this work and studies in other animal models indicates developing dopamine systems may be particularly vulnerable to adverse environments during pregnancy. At the Strömngren Symposium he will give a lecture on *Vitamin D and the ontogeny of dopamine systems: Implications for schizophrenia*.

How to get there

