

TWO TOPPFORSK GRANTS FOR SARS CENTRE GROUP LEADERS

Fabian Rentzsch and Daniel Chourrout have obtained two prestigious grants Toppforsk which will be co-financed by the Research Council of Norway and the University of Bergen. Toppforsk grants provide an unusually high level of funding (15-25 MNOK), allowing to neatly increase the size of research groups during 4-5 years (recruitment of several postdocs and/or PhD students). The criteria for selecting these grants are very similar to those of ERC grants, mainly based on new ideas and feasibility of the proposed research. Toppforsk laureates are also committed to prepare an ERC application during the period of their new project. Out of 35 applications sent from the Bergen area, 8 are going to be funded and it is therefore excellent news that the Sars Centre managed to get two of them funded.

The two projects are entitled: **“The unlimited neurogenic potential of a sea anemone as a new model to understand the generation of neurons in embryogenesis and regeneration”** for Fabian Rentzsch, and **Acceleration of evolution in chordates and the origin of larvaceans** for Daniel Chourrout

In the project of Fabian Rentzsch, the molecular control of the generation of nerve cells in *Nematostella* will be analysed by identifying the transcriptional and epigenetic profiles of different neural cell types. This process will be studied during embryogenesis and during nervous system regeneration, with the aim to better understand the remarkable lifelong neurogenic potential these animals.

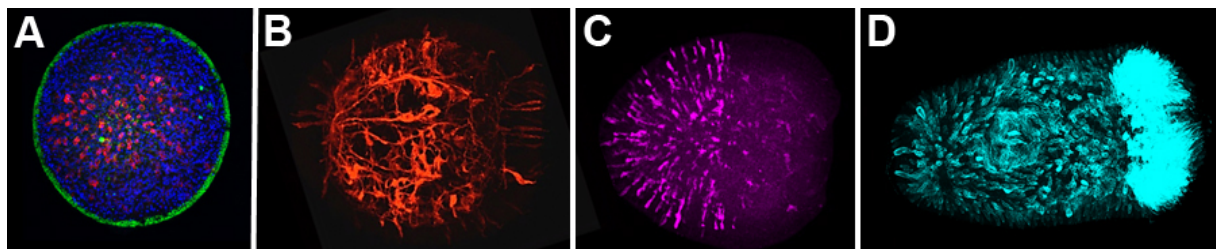


Figure: Different populations of neurons and neural progenitor cells highlighted by transgenic reporter constructs.