



Commentary

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Concept of Cellular & Molecular Neuroscience

Tony Samson*

Department of Neuroimagine, Stanford University, USA

*Corresponding author: Tony Samson, Department of Neuroimagine, Stanford University, USA.. E-mail: Tony_sam@gmail.com

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Description

The study of the behaviour of neurons at the cellular and molecular level features a long and distinguished tradition in Cambridge. Work on the cellular basis of sensation, developmental neurobiology, cell signalling, ion channels, neural degeneration and repair, and more integrative aspects of nervous system function are all strong areas within the School. Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience publishes original research of high significance covering all aspects of neurosciences indicated by the broadest interpretation of the journal's title.

Add this area creates a window into how neurons are born and migrate, and the way they form synaptic connections. Understanding how synapses function and undergo plasticity also allows insights into the molecular underpinnings of memory formation within the brain. Studying the ways in which neurons operate will move us closer to understanding how the brain develops and responds to outside stimuli. Cellular and molecular neuroscience may be a deep mystery, but it brings exciting and important bridges to other facets of brain and science.

Our focus in these important areas will help cause new treatments for both neurodevelopment diseases like autism, also as late-onset neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. In biology, communication between neurons typically occurs by chemical transmission across gaps between the cells called synapses. The transmitted chemicals, referred to as neurotransmitters, regulate a big fraction of important body functions. It's possible to anatomically locate neurotransmitters by labeling techniques. Neurotransmitters are released in discrete packets referred to as quanta from the axon terminal of 1 neuron to the dendrites of another across a synapse.

Neurotransmitters are released from an axon terminal and bind to postsynaptic dendrites within the following procession:

- * Mobilization/recruitment of synaptic vesicle from cytoskeleton
- * Docking of vesicle (binding) to presynaptic membrane

- * Priming of vesicle by ATP (relatively slow step)
- * Fusion of primed vesicle with presynaptic membrane and exocytosis of the housed neurotransmitter
- * Uptake of neurotransmitters in receptors of a postsynaptic cell
- * Initiation or inhibition of nerve impulse in postsynaptic cell counting on whether the neurotransmitters are excitatory or inhibitory (excitatory will end in depolarization of the postsynaptic membrane).

Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology publishes original research concerned with the analysis of neuronal and brain function at the cellular and subcellular levels. The journal offers timely, peer-reviewed articles that describe anatomic, genetic, physiologic, pharmacologic, and biochemical approaches to the study of neuronal function and therefore the analysis of elementary mechanisms. Neuroscience is inherently interdisciplinary in its quest to elucidate the brain. Like all biological structures the brain operates at multiple levels, from nano-scale molecules to meter-scale systems. Here, I argue that understanding the nano-scale organization of the brain isn't only helpful for insight into its function, but is really a requisite for such insight.

As scientists, we are both empowered and limited by the technical approaches we use, and have a tendency to be insular therein we frequently don't immediately grasp the importance and implications of other approaches. Here, I mean not just techniques, but ways of brooding about a drag. Several lines of argument show that a molecular understanding of the brain is actually necessary. First, the more practical arguments. In pursuing an understanding of the brain solely supported the activity of neurons in circuits, it's straightforward to map the firing patterns of neurons and their connections.

The study of the behaviour of neurons at the cellular and molecular level has a long and distinguished tradition in Cambridge. Work on the cellular basis of sensation, developmental neurobiology, cell signalling, ion channels, neural degeneration and repair, and more integrative aspects of nervous system function are all strong areas in the School. Research spans a diverse spectrum from molecular signalling to neuroendocrinology to sensory and motor systems, with techniques used ranging from biochemical, single-cell recording and behavioural studies to large-scale computational methods.

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