

Marie Curie Alumni Association Austrian Chapter



NEWS FROM THE MCAA

MCAA's "My Super Science Heroes"

NEWS FROM THE CHAPTER

Chapter Chair, Mostafa Shawrav, unveils the Chapter's strategy for the coming months

MEMBERS' CORNER

Meet a member and get to know about her/his research projects and special achievements

UPCOMING EVENTS

Planned activities in 2017

NEWS FROM THE MCAA

MCAA is launching the book series "[My Super Science Heroes](#)" on *Indiegogo* with the main goal of informing children between five and eight years old about the history of science in a fun way. The stories involve renowned scientists and, at the same time, promote the idea that great scientific achievements are not limited to extraordinary minds. Instead, it is within reach of every person who is willing to perceive and to be curious and creative. The fundraising campaign will start soon. [Join the VIP list](#) to get firsthand information on project launch.



NEWS FROM THE CHAPTER

WHAT'S NEXT? (by MOSTAFA SHAWRAV)

The MCAA Austrian Chapter (MCA³C) has the ambition to set the standard that other Chapters will then follow. The four-Member MCA³C Board, comprised of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Ex-Chair serving as advisor, is working hard to offer a range of training and career development opportunities to its Members, as well as to foster networking among Members for both research and professional collaboration.

We already have a workshop on presentation skills organized in June, as well as a career development event planned for autumn. In addition to our biannual Chapter meetings in spring and autumn, we will be organizing more informal social events in various cities throughout the year.

To improve communication amongst MCA³C Members and to reach a wider audience, we will produce a biannual newsletter, regularly update our Facebook and LinkedIn accounts with Member-relevant information, and announce Chapter events through social media and through our contacts at individual universities, as well as the MSCA National Contact Point. Our communication strategy aims to improve Member engagement, reaching MSCA scholars who are not yet members, and to raise the profile of MCA³C and MCAA within the research community at large.

MCA³C already has plans to organize career fair events for MCAA Members in 2018 and is also researching a bid to host the MCAA General Assembly 2019 in Austria. Finally, MCA³C is looking for ways to attract local sponsors for events. For that purpose, we are considering the possibility of MCA³C to become a recognized entity in Austria, instead of being a sub-group of the Belgium-based MCAA. This issue may arise for other MCAA Chapters, and we hope to share our expertise with the community on this matter.

The MCA³C Board would like to thank the current MCAA executive committee, Board and contractor for their continued support and encouragement. Finally, we invite all MCAA Members to become more active in their local Chapters. The success and growth of MCAA Chapters depends on Member involvement at every level!

Current MCA³C Board

Chair: Mostafa Shawrav
Vice-Chair: Mohammad Rezaei
Secretary: Clara Gomes
Advisor: Matthew DiFranco



MEMBERS' CORNER

YES, WE CAN (by CLARA GOMES)

It might seem natural for some researchers of the younger generation to share offices with female research fellows or have female co-authors on publications. Nevertheless, the idea that women possess an equal capacity as men to make significant contributions to science has not been around for that long. Many women in the history of discoveries and breakthroughs in science were overshadowed by their male partners and research colleagues. From Maria Gaetana Agnesi (1781-1869), a mathematician and philosopher, or (how could I not mention her) Marie Curie (1867-1932)*, a physicist and chemist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity, to Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard, a biologist who won a Nobel Prize in 1995 for her work on genetic control of embryonic development, women have been present and making a difference in the advancement of knowledge in the different areas of science, even though they were rarely in the spotlight or recognized for their work.

Even with the significant progress achieved in recent years, we still have a long way to go before women are granted the same opportunities to contribute to science compared to men. As an example, if we consider the statistics regarding the percentage of female and male employees at the University of Vienna, there appears to be an imbalance in favor of males in higher positions, starting at the post-doc level, and this is true across all disciplines⁽¹⁾. It is essential to highlight that although granting the same rights to women in academia was an important step, it is only a first step, and there is more work to be done. Most importantly, we need to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the female workforce, develop innovative policies and offer services that support women in the process of career development. I know firsthand the difficulties women can face in academia. As a wife and mother myself, I have had to make difficult decisions and compromises along the way in order to have the chance to live my passion for research and to assuage my incessant thirst for learning in my field. Only changes that make daily-life practicable will have the potential to provide women with real and equal chances to dedicate themselves to research.

We, from the Austrian Chapter, want to make our small contribution and show a sign that we are supportive of strategies that target the improvement of opportunities for women to undertake a career in science. To that end, we would like to dedicate our first issue to proudly introduce one of our female members who is making a valuable contribution to her field of research.



Jana Kemnitz is a Ph.D. student at the Paracelsus Medical University in Salzburg. She is currently working on the research project **KNEEMO for knee osteoarthritis** funded by the European Commission's

Framework 7 Programme - Initial Training Network. Her Ph.D. work focuses on the role of thigh muscles and fat around the thigh in knee osteoarthritis. This research aims to identify whether weak thigh muscles increase the risk of elderly people experiencing worsening knee osteoarthritis. Typically, muscle strength is assessed using maximum effort contractions. However, this method is influenced by pain experienced during the strength measurement itself. Therefore, Jana and her research team from the Musculoskeletal Research Group and Institute of Anatomy are not only looking at thigh muscle strength, but also muscle size and volume using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). These imaging techniques also visualize the fat between and surrounding the thigh muscles. They developed an automatic method of tracing the outline of different thigh structures using MRI to gain information about their size and volume. Using this unique method, they are investigating the relationship between the muscle and fat size of the thigh and worsening in pain and joint changes over a four year period in patients with knee osteoarthritis. This research will help to identify patients at high risk of worsening osteoarthritis and potentially provide clinicians with important targets for modifying disease progression. More information on Jana's exciting and interesting work can be found at <http://www.kneemo.eu>.

Area of research interest: knee osteoarthritis, medical imaging, automated segmentation

⁽¹⁾ Frauenförderung und Gleichstellung der Universität Wien. (2011). Gender im Fokus: Frauen und Männer an der Universität Wien. Retrieved from <https://personalwesen.univie.ac.at...homepage.pdf>

* For the ones interested in Marie Curie's extraordinary life trajectory from the perspective of a woman with a personal touch, "La ridícula idea de no volver a verte" by Rosa Montero (available in Spanish and French) is highly recommended.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2017

Join us at this year's planned Chapter events!

APRIL 22nd **Socializing/Networking**

Join us as official supporters of the **March for Science** in Vienna.

APRIL 28th **Meeting**

Chapter's **Spring Annual Meeting** in Vienna. Please pre-register.

Deadline April 22nd 2017.

JUNE 12th **Workshop**

"Presenting with Impact" by John Waterman in Vienna. Pre-registration required.

Deadline May 25th, 2017.

SEPTEMBER **Event**

"Career Development: Funding" in Vienna (details TBA)

SEPTEMBER 29th **Socializing/Networking**

Join us at the **Researchers' Night** in Vienna (details TBA).

OCTOBER **Meeting**

Chapter's **Autumn Annual Meeting** (details TBA)

MCA³C – Marie Curie Alumni Association Austrian Chapter
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www.mariecuriealumni.eu/groups/mca3c



The MCA³C is part of the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#). We encourage local networking and support members' career development. If you are still not a member of MCAA or MCA³C, you can [sign up now](#). Membership is open to all MCAA current fellows and alumni and is free of cost.

If you prefer not to receive our Newsletter in the future, please send us an e-mail with the heading "[unsubscribe to Newsletter](#)."

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