

Curriculum Vitae

Ofer Yizhar

Ofer Yizhar, Ph.D.

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Academic Degrees & Positions

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| 2019 – Present | Associate Professor, Dept. of Neurobiology, Weizmann Institute of Science |
| 2019 –2020 | Visiting Professor, Dept. of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Harvard University |
| 2011 – 2019 | Senior Scientist, Dept. of Neurobiology, Weizmann Institute of Science |
| 2008 – 2011 | Postdoctoral fellowship, Dept. of Bioengineering, Stanford University, CA, USA |
| 2001 – 2008 | Graduate studies (M.Sc. + Ph.D.) – Dept. of Neurobiology, Tel Aviv University |
| 1998 – 2001 | B.Sc., Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Life Science Honors Program – Etgar) |

Selected Projects

My research is focused on the functions performed by the prefrontal cortex, a neocortical region involved in high-level cognitive processes such as working memory and regulation of motivational and emotional states. A parallel line of research in the lab deals with the development of new optogenetic tools. Our projects intertwine the development of new tools with their implementation to address basic neuroscience questions. We have recently found that a family of bi-stable rhodopsin proteins that couple to the Gi/o signaling pathway is capable of effectively silencing presynaptic transmission in vitro and in vivo. We seek to identify additional naturally-occurring rhodopsin variants with unique spectral/kinetic properties, and to engineer existing ones to improve and diversify their function. Tools developed by the lab are rapidly disseminated to the community, and hundreds of labs across the world have already received our newly developed tools and are using them in their research.

Honors and Awards

- 2022 Elected member of the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO)
- 2021 Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Charitable Foundation Chair for Research in Neuroscience
- 2019 Recipient of the Levinson Prize, awarded by the Weizmann Institute of Science Scientific Council
- 2019 Recipient of the Sir Bernard Katz Prize (Heidelberg, Germany)
- 2018 Recipient of the Adelis Foundation Brain Research Award (Haifa, Israel)
- 2013 Career Development Award, Human Frontier Science Program
- 2012 'Alon Fellowship' for returning scientists, granted by the Israeli Council for Higher Education
- 2012 Incumbent of the Gertrude and Philip Nollman Career Development Chair, Weizmann Institute
- 2011 Recipient of the Sieratzki Prize for Advances in Neuroscience