Perspectives of a post-doc

• Background
• What you do as a post doc
• Things I wish I knew and nobody told me
• The next step to independence
• How do I become a Prof?
• Questions
Background

2004 - BSc (Hons) Anatomical Sciences – Bristol
2007 - PhD Neurophysiology – Leeds
2010 - Research Associate – Bristol
2014 - Research Fellow - Exeter
2014 - Associate Lecturer - Exeter

Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice (PCAP)
Fellow of the Higher Education Authority (FHEA)

Previous research
– The physiological role of Aβ in modulating ion channel function and the altered expression of ion channels in Alzheimer’s disease.

– The effects of acute stress on synaptic plasticity and the role of Aβ in modulating synaptic transmission and the signalling mechanisms involved.

Current research
– Altered intrinsic excitability in transgenic mouse models of progressive Aβ amyloidopathy.

– Epigenetic regulation of Aβ clearance and neuronal function in a human model of Alzheimer’s disease.
What you do as postdoc

- Supervision of PhD students
- Teaching/tutoring undergraduate students
- Published material (not just academic journals)
- Presentations/ posters
- Conference participation
- Reading widely
- Participate on committees
- Careers service courses and workshops
- Process budget accounts and ordering
- Prepare funding proposals
- Travel
- Volunteering – public engagement events

*How employers rank PhDs skills
Things I wish I knew

- Know who you going to work for and who runs the project.
- Be careful about working for new PI's.
- Not necessarily good/any line management skills.
- Size of the group you work with and dynamics within that group.
- Bringing in grant money is the basis of an academic career.
- Permanent jobs are few and far between.
- Networking and collaborating are more important than you think.
- Deadlines for fellowship applications take time.
- Post-docs can apply for grants as PI!

PhD → PDRA → PDRA → Fellowship → Principal investigator (standard grant)

Small grant involved in grant writing laying groundwork for fellowship
Fellowship opportunities

- At what point should I apply?
- Early career events
- Big funding bodies: MRC, Wellcome, BBSRC, Royal Society
- Specific charities
- Other funds specific for woman
- Returners to research – has to have 2 year gap

Tell your supervisor you would like to apply
Make sure you get support – through uni/superv/colleagues
Decisions take up to 6 months, 1 or 2 grant rounds a year.
Networking is important, getting your name known, publish, prove that you can bring in money www.rdinfo.org.uk

www.exeter.ac.uk/medicine
Teaching opportunities

- Lab supervision
- Small tutoring groups and demonstrator
- Seminar speaking
- Teaching fellows
- Preferences to trained staff – institutional postgraduate training
- FHEA
Considerations when applying

- What is your goal?
- What positions should I apply for?
- What will I get out of it?
- What will I be applying for in the future?

- E&R or E&S positions available
- Publications – show productivity, at least 1 a year.
- CV include citation number and impact factor
- Bullet point list of the person specification
- Grants!!! Even though you are a post-doc/PhD student – get awards!

FindAPostDoc

www.exeter.ac.uk/medicine
Summary

- More flexible jobs with a large degree of autonomy
- You’re in it because you love a challenge
- Travel and work anywhere in the world
- There will never be a good time to have a baby
- Good social environment

Bachelor  Master  PhD  Postdoc  PI  Emeritus Prof

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Any Questions?