

How a DNRF Center grant  
is making a difference

CON AMORE

Center on Autobiographical  
Memory Research

DNRF Annual Meeting 2011



Danmarks  
Grundforskningsfond  
Danish National  
Research Foundation



# Center on Autobiographical Memory Research [ CON AMORE ]

- › Opened January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010
- › 42 mio. DKK from DNRF
- › Located at Dept. of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences at Aarhus University
- › ~25 participants



# Autobiographical Memory

- › The ability to remember personal experiences as well as imagine possible future events
- › Central for participating in complex, social systems

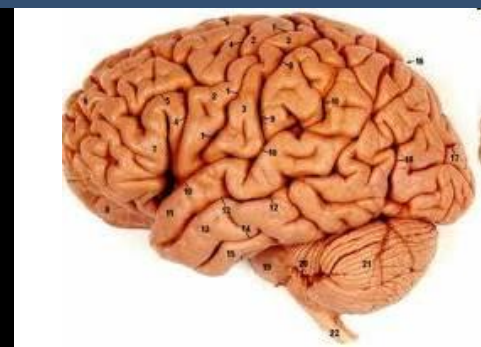




Cultural differences / Brain damage / Animal cognition / Infant cognition

# AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY

Cognitive Aging / Neural processes / Emotional disorders / Human development





My task today:

”Describe advantages and challenges related to developing a Centre of Excellence in a research environment with a tradition for more individual research projects”





# A few words on the surrounding **Psychology Department ...**





# The Psychology Department

## Some Characteristics

- › Focus on knowledge dissemination and teaching
- › Individual projects
- › Many publications in Danish, fewer in English
- › Poor laboratory facilities
- › Few international visitors, meetings
- › Total citations for 13 professors, Sum=3100 (range 5-1500; 6 have less than 60)





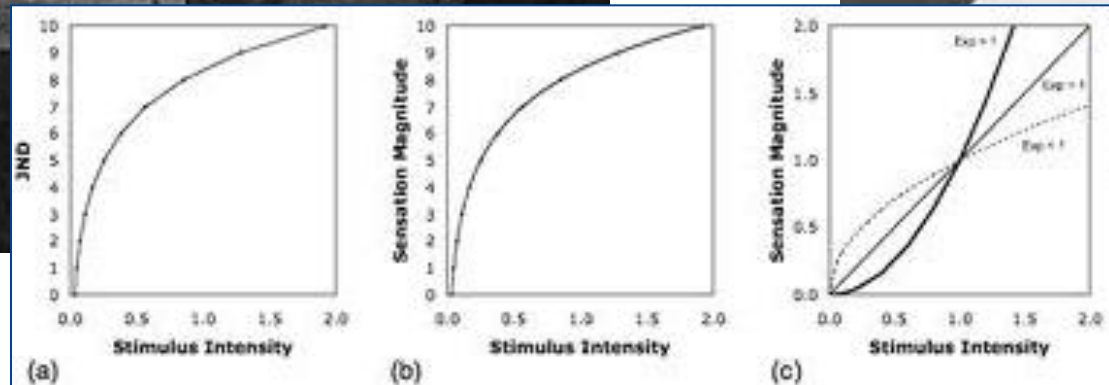
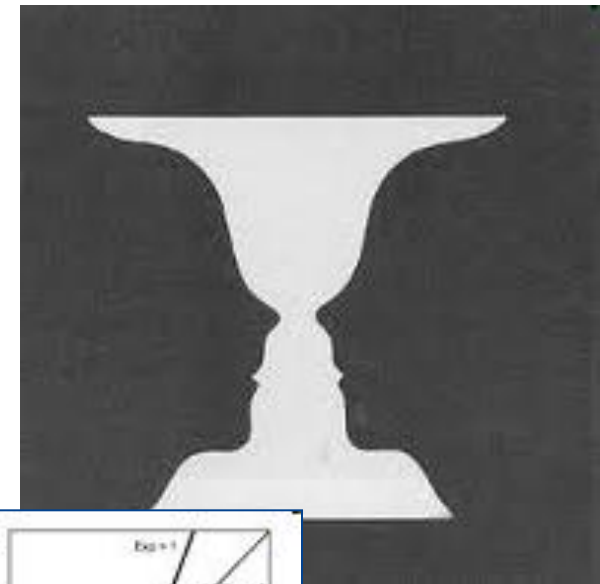
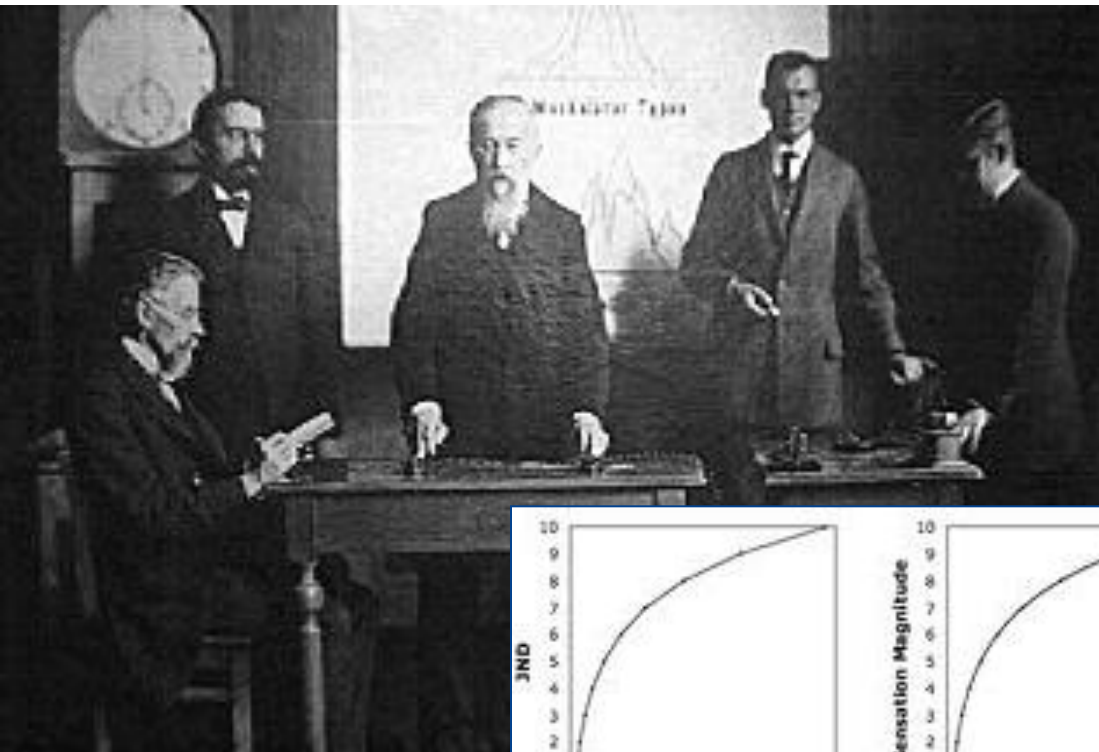
# How is the DNRF grant **making a difference?**

- › **Shortening the distance from idea to data**
- › Talent development
- › Advancing autobiographical memory research internationally



Shortening the distance from

**idea → data**





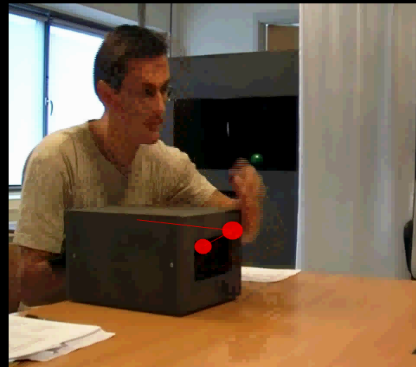
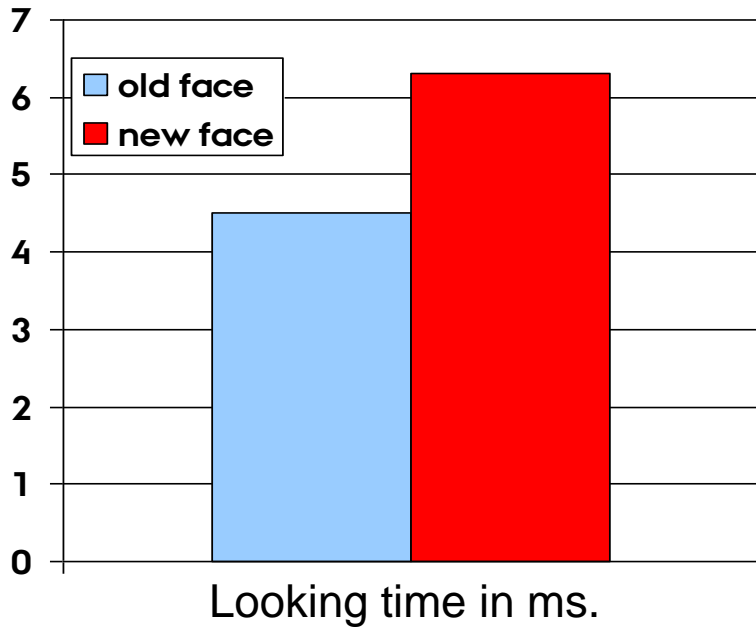
# First year of CON AMORE: **Building laboratories**

- › Laboratory for infant cognition  
(e.g., use of eye tracking equipment)
- › Computer laboratory  
(systematic presentation of stimuli  
and recording of responses)



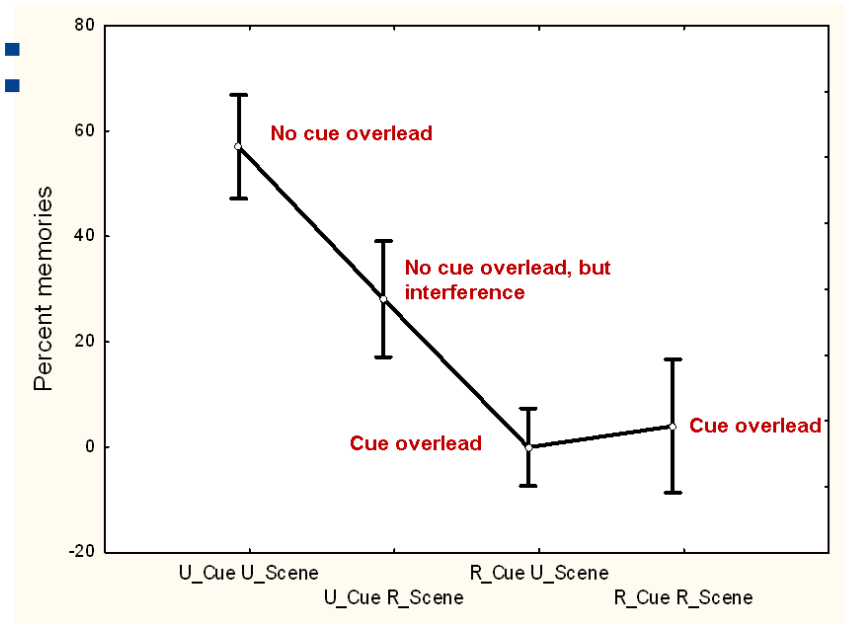
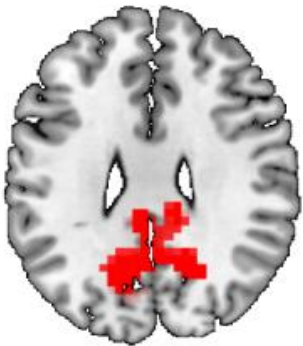
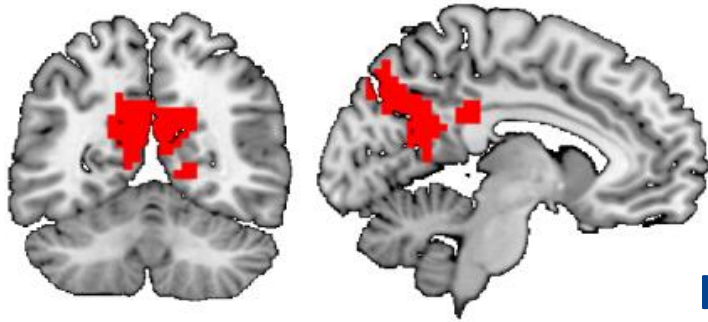
# Infant lab:

Use of eye tracking ~ indirect memory measure



# Computer laboratory:

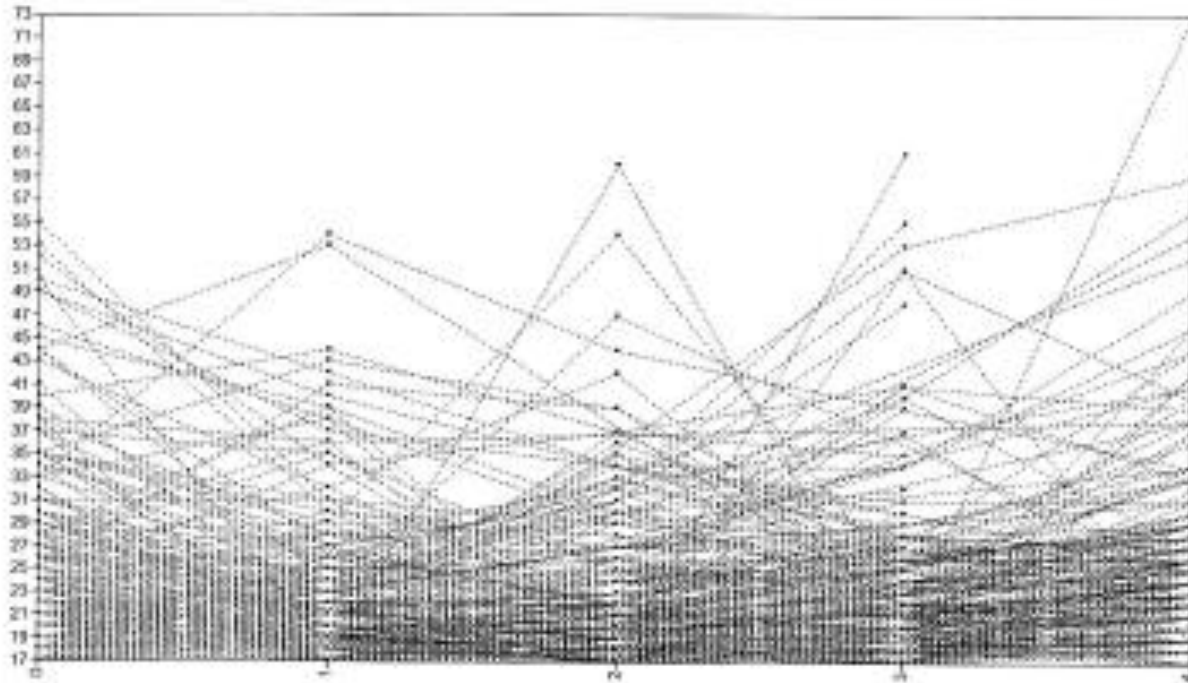
Manipulating activation of involuntary memories



**Involuntary:**

Sound+Picture > Sound Only ( $p < .001$ ,  $k = 10$ )

# Adequate Statistical Support



Posttraumatic stress symptoms in Danish soldiers measured 5 times before, during, and after deployment.

Recently analyzed through Growth Mixture Modeling



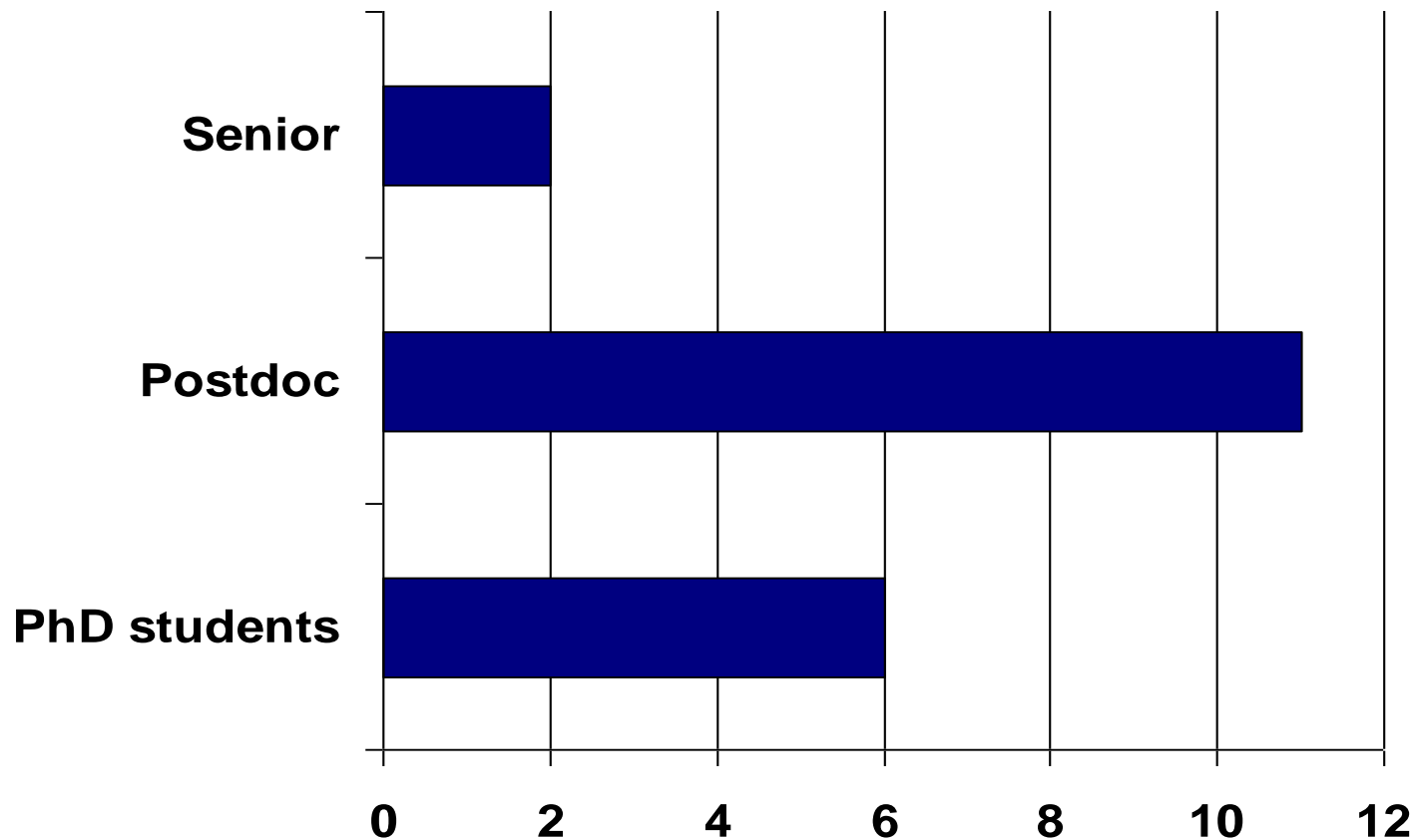
# How is the DNRF grant **making a difference?**

- › Shortening the distance from idea to data
- › **Talent development**
- › Advancing autobiographical  
memory research internationally



# Talent development:

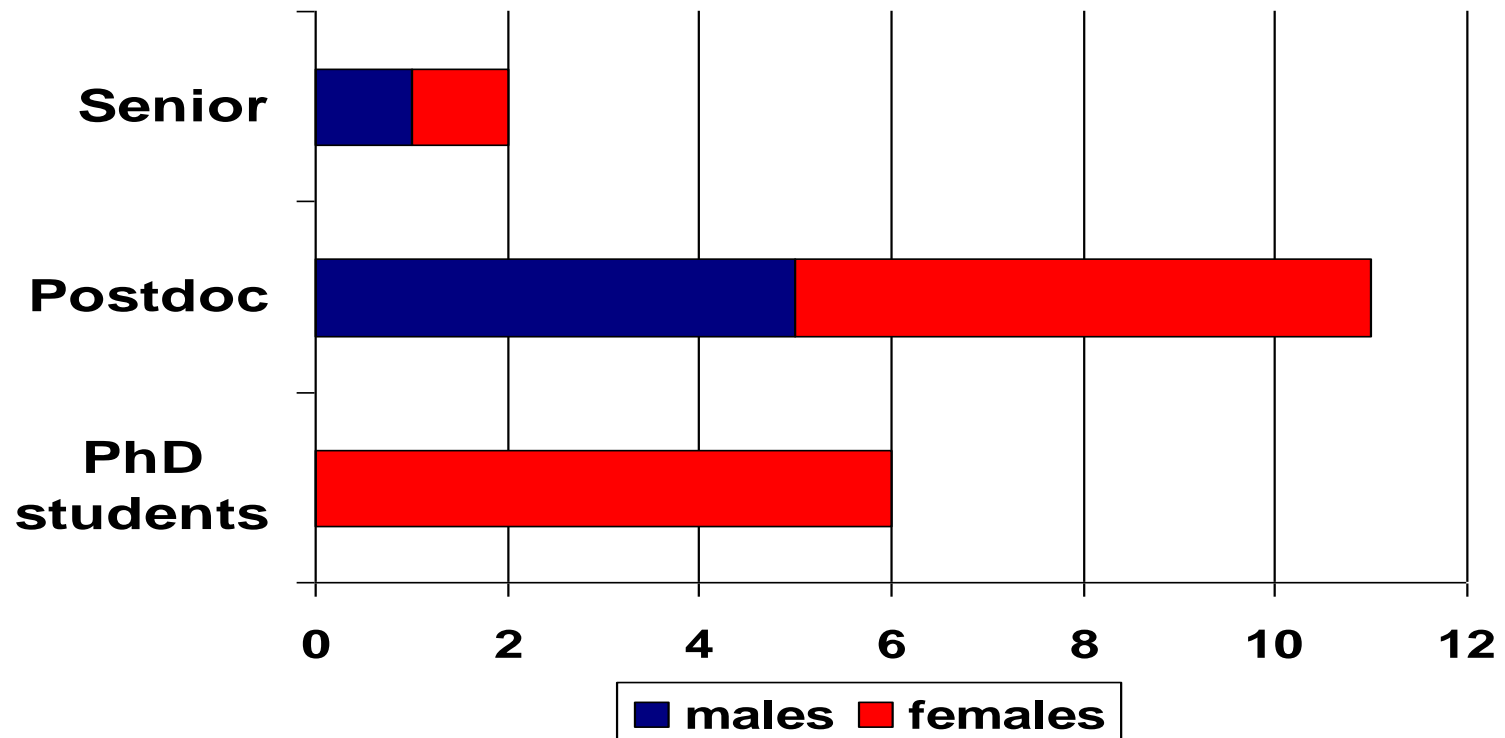
Number of (full time) senior researchers, postdoc and PhD students at CON AMORE



# Talent development:

Number of (full time) senior researchers, postdoc and PhD students at CON AMORE

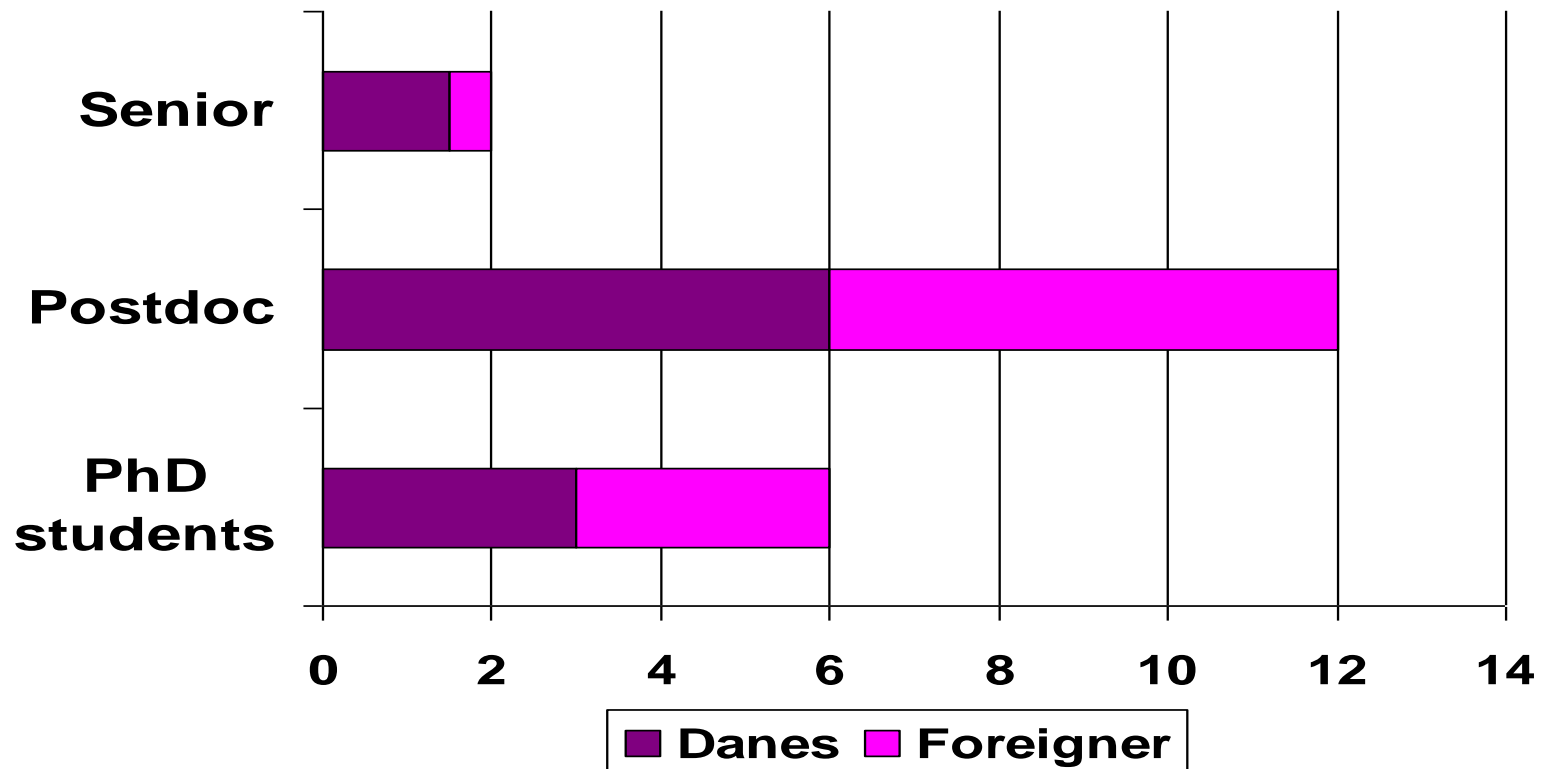
by gender :



# Talent development:

Number of (full time) senior researchers, postdoc and PhD students at CON AMORE

## Danes vs. Foreigners:





# How is the DNRF grant **making a difference?**

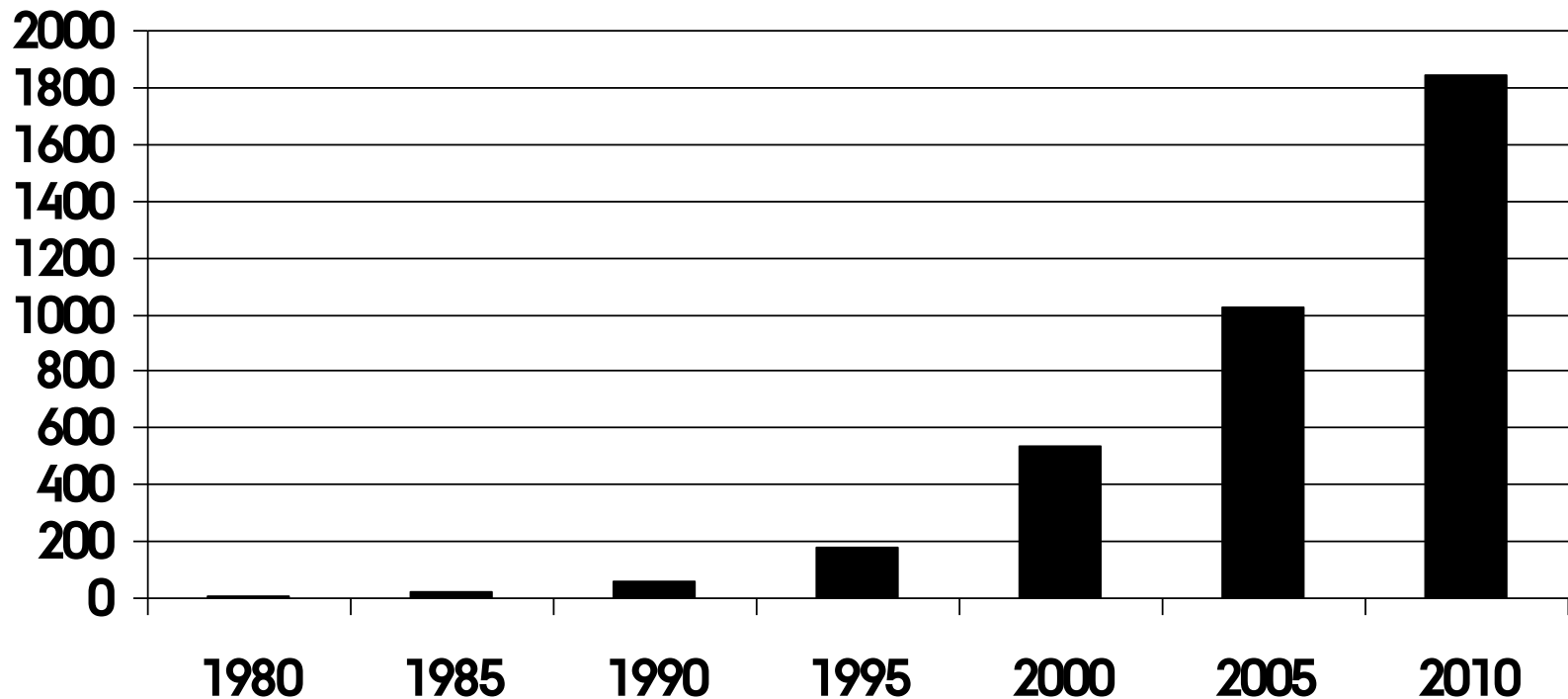
- › Shortening the distance from idea to data
- › Talent development
- › **Advancing autobiographical  
memory research internationally**



# Peer Reviewed Articles 1980-2010

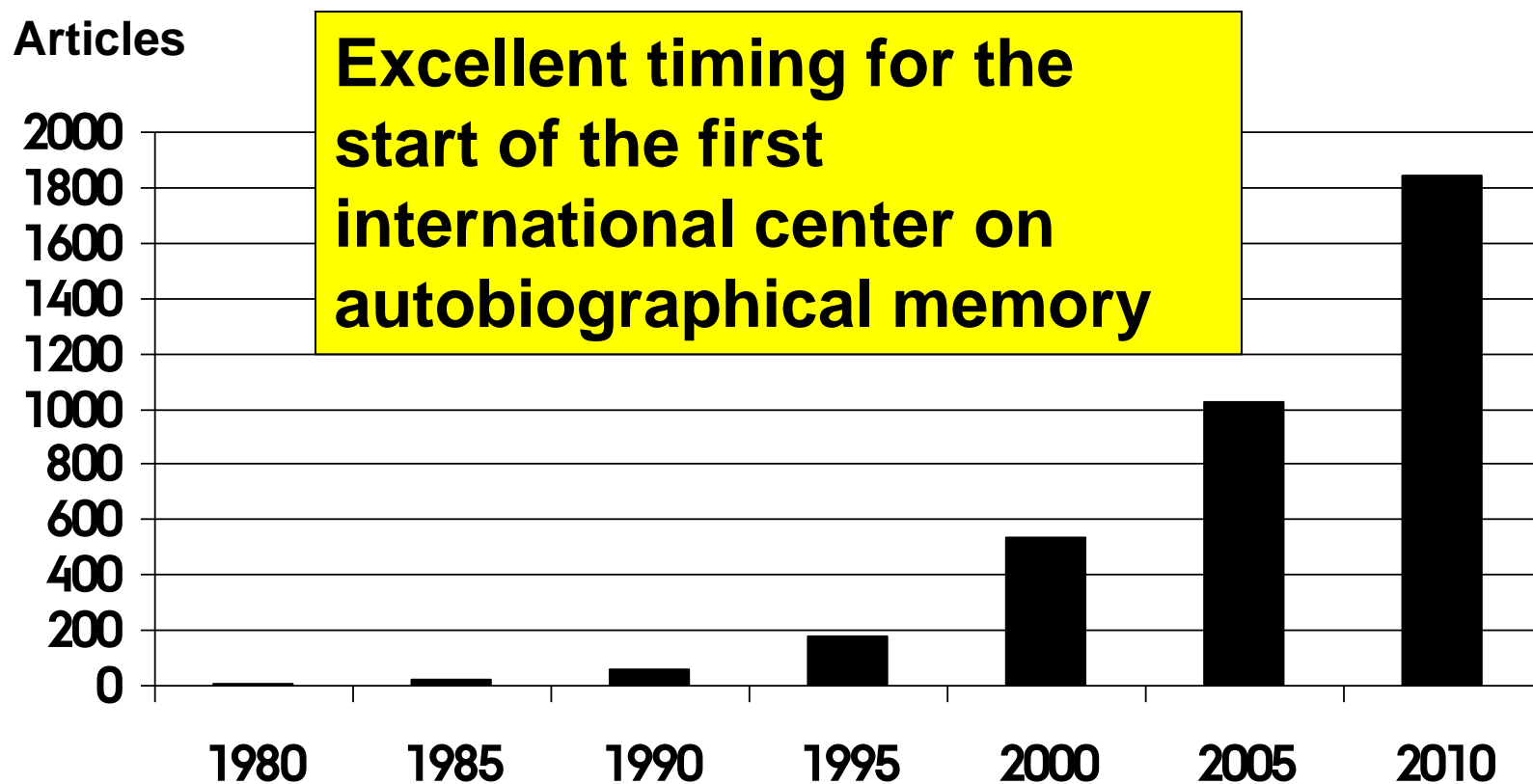
with **autobiographical memory** as keyword

Articles



# Peer Reviewed Articles 1980-2010

with **autobiographical memory** as keyword



First international  
open call conference on  
Autobiographical Memory

More than 150 participants  
from 15 different countries



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# THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY

JUNE 13<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2010

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

ALAN BADDELEY, UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
PATRICIA BAUER, EMORY UNIVERSITY  
DORTHE BERNTSEN, AARHUS UNIVERSITY  
NORMAN BROWN, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
ROBERTO CABEZA, DUKE UNIVERSITY  
MARTIN A. CONWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS  
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MORRIS MOSCOVITCH, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DAVID PILLEMER, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
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Berntsen & Rubin (eds).  
(in press)  
Understanding  
Autobiographical memory  
Cambridge University Press



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PERSPECTIVES ON  
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First open call conference  
this year on  
developmental  
perspectives on  
autobiographical memory



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PERSPECTIVES ON  
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DEVELOPMENT

JUNE 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2011

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Upcoming conference in

2012

on clinical perspectives on  
autobiographical memory



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CLINICAL PERSPECTIVES  
ON

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL  
MEMORY

AARHUS UNIVERSITY JUNE 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 2012

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Dorthe Berntsen, Aarhus University

Richard A. Bryant, University of New South Wales

Anke Ehlers, King's College London

Dirk Hermans, University of Leuven

Emily A. Holmes, University of Oxford

Richard J. McNally, Harvard University

Michelle L. Moulds, University of New South Wales

David C. Rubin, Duke University

Ed Watkins, University of Exeter

J. Mark G. Williams, University of Oxford

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# Perspectives on Autobiographical Memory Conferences 2010-2012



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## **PERSPECTIVES ON AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY DEVELOPMENT** JUNE 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2011

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Robyn Fivush, Emory University (USA)  
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## **CLINICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY** AARHUS UNIVERSITY JUNE 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 2012

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# This would not have been possible without...

- › The DNRF grant
- › Support from Aarhus University, e.g.,
  - › Central office for economy
  - › Central office for internationalization
  - › Central office for grant support
- › Strong, young talents within the area  
– nationally and internationally





# Thank You

Dorthe Berntsen  
Aarhus University

