

AN ERC RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY in Gdynia, Poland

Press release: July 3rd 2017

The [ERC=Science²](#) campaign events which took place in Gdynia, Poland in May and June were full of science communication activities dedicated to the longevity research funded by the [European Research Council \(ERC\)](#). Over 1800 participants came to discover and learn about the latest ERC-funded research in various formats of events organized by the [EXPERYMENT Science Centre](#).

BRINGING SCIENCE TO THE CITY CENTRE – PUBLIC SPACE ACTIVITIES

In the beginning of May, EXPERYMENT Science Centre's educators appeared in the public space with the project pop-up stand and hands-on activities designed to sparkle the interest in one of the most important science theme of today – longevity and cutting-edge research in the topic. One of the main squares in Gdynia became vibrant with hands-on activities organized around the bright orange ERC=Science² stand and other forms of interactions with the public.

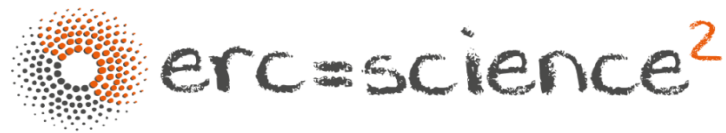
A good space for dialogue

During two days' (6th - 7th May) a public event took place in the vicinity of Gdynia Infobox, where EXPERYMENT's educators set up the project stand and engaged the public with the current and most cutting-edge ERC-funded longevity research. Over the course of the two days, **more than 500 city dwellers and tourists participated in the activities**. The spotlight was put on the leading researchers who are helping to unravel the mysteries behind the ageing process to provide directions on how can one alleviate some of the associated problems. Featured articles, videos and interactive content of the pop-up stand was warmly welcome by the public and induced talks with educators – on health issues, genetics and new research. The public was very diversified and included families with children, youth, students and seniors. *“The interactive content available in the stand was very informative – one of the visitors, an active grandmother, said – I knew that women live longer, but never wondered deeply about the results of these phenomena. The outcomes of this research are fascinating.”*

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 672302)



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Food for thought

The interactive workshops and science busking accompanied the pop-up stand and helped to re-design the square space into a picnic area, where public was challenged to try brain training puzzles, board games, mnemonics games and different concentration exercises.

A RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY – ERC RESEARCH DIALOGUE ACTIVITIES

More than 1300 guests visited the premises of the EXPERYMENT Science Centre during the longevity-themed weekend (24th- 25th June). The dialogue event was filled with activities, such as hands-on workshops, games, as well as a science café with one of the ERC grantees.

Interactive experiences

The well-known and appreciated format of interactive workshops attracted several dozens of guests – from families and youth to seniors. The meetings, which were repeated during two days – ‘*Saved in the genes*’ and ‘*Free radicals versus longevity*’, gave the participants an opportunity not only to conduct fascinating experiments but, more importantly, to discuss the new ERC research in the area of longevity. With the help of educators, guests had a chance to isolate the DNA or make a model of DNA molecule, as well as to gain knowledge about the immune system and its involvement in ageing. Participants also interactively learned about some of the ageing factors, for instance, free radicals and their role, sources, and connections with stimulants and reactions. As one of the participants said, “*For me it was very valuable to take part in the event and conducting of experiments, especially then the chemical reaction workshop showing the powerful and destructive influence of free radicals in our bodies.*”

In the exhibition area, each guest had the unique opportunity to ‘*feel the age*’ – by trying on an ageing simulator, mimicking how one could feel as an elderly person. Trying to walk or even sit down and grab objects wearing this full-body equipment was a challenge. For many participants the experience was very emotional - simulator helped them to understand the burdens of old age and reduced abilities.

Science talk

The most important element of the event was the science café with [Marcin Nowotny, PhD.](#), Head of the Laboratory of Protein Structure at the International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw, who presented his ERC-funded research and discussed with the public how to understand the functioning of the body at the level of individual atoms.

He engaged in a very vivid follow-up discussion which generated many questions from the audience. The cutting-edge research, which was presented received a lot of attention and was very much

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appreciated by the participants. *“It was extremely important for me to gain knowledge on new Alzheimer’s disease research – one of adult guest said – since both, my grandfather and uncle, suffered from this disease. The workshops and talks with the scientist convinced me to take the genetic tests and start prevention as soon as possible – with diet changes and memory trainings, which can be helpful with slowing the disease development.”*

The activities of the science centres and museums are coordinated by [ECSITE](#), the European Network of Science Centres and Museums, while the project is coordinated by [Science | Business](#).

To find out more about the ERC=Science² campaign, featured ERC-funded research and the project multimedia content, please visit www.sciencesquared.eu

To get the latest news and updates follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/Scisq](https://twitter.com/Scisq) and like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ScienceSquaredbyERC>.

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