

Seminar IRH-ICUB

Consciousness and Cognition: An Interdisciplinary Approach

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convenor Dr. Diana Stanciu

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Date: Tuesday, 24 May 2016, 17h

Place: IRH-ICUB (1 D. Brandza Str.), conference room

Dr. Dragos Mihai Maliia

University Emergency Hospital, Bucharest

Dr. Dragos Mihai Maliia works at the University Emergency Hospital in Bucharest and has a special interest in epileptology. He is a graduate with honors of the ‘Carol Davila’ University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest and is a member of the Romanian Epilepsy Surgery Programme, with considerable experience in presurgical evaluation, implantation design via the SEEG technique, invasive monitoring and direct electrical stimulation, resection proposal, intraoperative functional mapping and postoperative follow up. He has already completed two grant assignments: one at the EAN Department to Department Co-operation in Freiburg Epilepsiezentrum, Germany and one at the Danish Epilepsy Center, Dianalund, Denmark (IFCN Research Award). Dr. Maliia is a member of the International League against Epilepsy, the International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology and E-epilepsy Consortium. He published numerous specialised articles and delivered speeches at several European events in the field. He is particularly interested in cognitive science and especially in the study of consciousness and the philosophical literature related to that.

Seizures as Glimpses into Consciousness

The dynamics of conscious states in respect to epileptic activity is surely an interaction between two functional networks: one physiological-default mode network (DMN) and one pathological-epileptome. The method by which this arises is a matter of speculation at this point with two theories standing out: “the network inhibition” hypothesis sustains that there is an indirect inhibition of the DMN via the profound diencephalic structures (thalamus), while the “diminished workspace” hypothesis states that during the seizure more and more critical hubs of the DMN connectome are recruited by the epileptome. The mechanism by which the reverse happens-the sudden/gradual regaining of consciousness in the postictal phase is a topic that benefits of even less empirical data and deserves further attention.

My talk will try to summarize the current body of knowledge and proof in the field, together with some unpublished results from my research group. This part will be followed by a video session where I will present various epileptic and non-epileptic seizures’ semiology and their characteristic “impairment” in the stream of consciousness. Discussions upon the material will be encouraged.