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CONTACT INFORMATION

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BACKGROUND

- **2020:** Neurophysiology Privatdozent (*Venia Docendi*). Medical University of Vienna Austria.
- **2009-Present:** Assistant Professor / Associate Professor (2014), Medical University of Vienna.
- **2004-2008:** Postdoctoral Researcher. Columbia University, Center for Neurobiology & Behavior, New York, NY, USA. Laboratory of Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Eric Kandel.
- **2003-2004:** Postdoctoral Researcher. Boston University, Medical Center, Vascular Physiology Unit, Boston, MA, USA. Laboratory of Dr. Victoria Bolotina.
- **2000-2003:** Postdoctoral Researcher. Max-Planck Institute for Experimental Medicine, Göttingen, Germany. Laboratory of Dr. Walter Stühmer.
- **1995-1999:** Ph.D. in Biology. University of Seville, School of Medicine, Department of Physiology and Biophysics, Seville, Spain. Director: Dr. José López-Barneo.
- **1991-1995:** Psychologist. Catholic University of Colombia. Visiting Student-Researcher at New York University, School of Medicine, New York, USA. Director, Dr. Rodolfo R. Llinás.

RECENT GRANTS

- **2018-2023: The role of microRNAs in learned safety.**
Founding Source: Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Principal Investigator
- **2015-2018: Podoplanin: a new regulator of synaptic plasticity in the brain.**
Founding Source: Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Principal Investigator

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **2009-Present:** Medical University of Vienna: Functional systems & biological regulation; Skin & cognition organs; Brain & nerve system, General Toxicology & Organ toxicology, SSM3 seminars, Medical Propedeutics III – Anatomy & Physiology; PhD Thesis seminar "Technique & methods seminar", Basic seminar: Signal transduction.
- **2015-2018:** Institute of Medical Cybernetics & Artificial Intelligence of Vienna, Austria. Neurophysiology of Love. Invited Lecturer, Seminar series "Love: A Multidisciplinary Approach" by Prof. Dr. Robert Trapp.

KEYWORDS

Neuroscience; Neurophysiology; Neuropharmacology; Behavioral Neuroscience; Affective Neuroscience; Cognitive Neuroscience; Learning and Memory; Synaptic Plasticity; Metaplasticity; Electrophysiology; Hippocampus; Amygdala.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- **Our research** employs murine-based genetic and disease models, behavioral tests, and both *in vitro* and *in vivo* biophysical approaches to investigate molecular components and functional processes regulating neuronal circuits involved in emotional and cognitive functions. Our work places special emphasis on studying **synaptic dynamics** using electrophysiological techniques, which allow us to examine in real-time synaptic modifications at single cell and circuit levels. We study effects of exogenous (natural and synthetic) compounds as well as endogenously produced biomolecules on different forms of synaptic plasticity, including long-term potentiation (LTP), long-term depression (LTD), presynaptic-dependent plasticity, and metaplasticity.
- **Biochemical methods**, such as western blotting and proteomics, help us identifying signaling molecules regulating synaptic functions, while molecular biology tools like gene knockout models help us elucidating gene roles in emotional and cognitive functions. **Behavioral studies** in murine models (using assays like the Morris water task, hole-board, and fear conditioning) link genetic changes and pharmacological interventions to cognitive outcomes. These studies, despite unequivocal differences from human experiences, provide valuable insights into the human nervous system function in health and disease.
- **By integrating** electrophysiological, biochemical, molecular biological, and behavioral approaches, we aim to help developing a picture of the brain function in both health and disease. This multidisciplinary strategy has the potential to contribute to the development of effective interventions for neurological and psychiatric disorders.

TECHNIQUES / METHODS

- Extracellular recordings on brain slices
- *In vivo* Electrophysiology
- Patch clamp and intracellular recordings
- Simultaneous patch-clamp/Optogenetic activation
- Cell lines culture & Primary dissociated neuronal cultures
- Confocal microscopy
- Behavioral Methods (hole-board test, open field test, elevated plus maze)

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

1. Cognitive performance in aged rats is associated with differences in distinctive neuronal populations in the ventral tegmental area and altered synaptic plasticity in the hippocampus. Sagheddu C, Stojanovic T, Kouhnavardi S, Savchenko A, Hussein AM, Pistis M, **Monje FJ**, Plasenzotti R, Aufy M, Studenik CR, Lubec J, Lubec G. *Front Aging Neurosci.* 2024 Feb 26;16:1357347. doi: 10.3389/fnagi.2024.1357347. eCollection 2024.PMID: 38469164
2. PolyQ length-based molecular encoding of vocalization frequency in FOXP2. Vaglietti S, Villeri V, Dell'Oca M, Marchetti C, Cesano F, Rizzo F, Miller D, LaPierre L, Pelassa I, **Monje FJ**, Colnaghi L, Ghirardi M, Fiumara F. *iScience.* 2023 Sep 27;26(10):108036. doi: 10.1016/j.isci.2023.108036. eCollection 2023 Oct 20.PMID: 37860754
3. miRNA-132/212 Deficiency Disrupts Selective Corticosterone Modulation of Dorsal vs. Ventral Hippocampal Metaplasticity. Kouhnavardi S, Cabatic M, Mañas-Padilla MC, Malabanan MA, Smani T, Cicvaric A, Muñoz Aranzalez EA, Koenig X, Urban E, Lubec G, Castilla-Ortega E, **Monje FJ**. *Int J Mol Sci.* 2023 May 31;24(11):9565. doi: 10.3390/ijms24119565.PMID: 37298523

4. [FIBCD1 is an endocytic GAG receptor associated with a novel neurodevelopmental disorder.](#) Fell CW, Hagelkruys A, Cicvaric A, Horrer M, Liu L, Li JSS, Stadlmann J, Polyansky AA, Mereiter S, Tejada MA, Kokotović T, Achuta VS, Scaramuzza A, Twyman KA, Morrow MM, Juusola J, Yan H, Wang J, Burmeister M, Choudhury B, Andersen TL, Wirnsberger G, Holmskov U, Perrimon N, Žagrović B, **Monje FJ**, Moeller JB, Penninger JM, Nagy V. *EMBO Mol Med.* 2022 Sep 7;14(9):e15829. doi: 10.15252/emmm.202215829. Epub 2022 Aug 2. PMID: 35916241
5. [A Novel and Selective Dopamine Transporter Inhibitor, \(S\)-MK-26, Promotes Hippocampal Synaptic Plasticity and Restores Effort-Related Motivational Dysfunctions.](#) Kouhnavardi S, Ecevitoglu A, Dragačević V, Sanna F, Arias-Sandoval E, Kalaba P, Kirchhofer M, Lubec J, Niello M, Holy M, Zehl M, Pillwein M, Wackerlig J, Murau R, Mohrmann A, Beard KR, Sitte HH, Urban E, Sagheddu C, Pistis M, Plasenzotti R, Salamone JD, Langer T, Lubec G, **Monje FJ**. *Biomolecules.* 2022 Jun 24;12(7):881. doi: 10.3390/biom12070881. PMID: 35883437
6. [Age-Dependent and Pathway-Specific Bimodal Action of Nicotine on Synaptic Plasticity in the Hippocampus of Mice Lacking the miR-132/212 Genes.](#) Stojanovic T, Velarde Gamez D, Schuld GJ, Bormann D, Cabatic M, Uhrin P, Lubec G, **Monje FJ**. *Cells.* 2022 Jan 13;11(2):261. doi: 10.3390/cells11020261. PMID: 35053378
7. [miRNA-132/212 Gene-Deletion Aggravates the Effect of Oxygen-Glucose Deprivation on Synaptic Functions in the Female Mouse Hippocampus.](#) Bormann D, Stojanovic T, Cicvaric A, Schuld GJ, Cabatic M, Ankersmit HJ, **Monje FJ**. *Cells.* 2021 Jul 6;10(7):1709. doi: 10.3390/cells10071709. PMID: 34359879
8. [Reinstatement of synaptic plasticity in the aging brain through specific dopamine transporter inhibition.](#) Lubec J, Kalaba P, Hussein AM, Feyissa DD, Kotob MH, Mahmmoud RR, Wieder O, Garon A, Sagheddu C, Ilic M, Dragačević V, Cybulska-Klosowicz A, Zehl M, Wackerlig J, Sartori SB, Ebner K, Kouhnavardi S, Roller A, Gajic N, Pistis M, Singewald N, Leban JJ, Korz V, Malikovic J, Plasenzotti R, Sitte HH, **Monje FJ**, Langer T, Urban E, Pifl C, Lubec G. *Mol Psychiatry.* 2021 Dec;26(12):7076-7090. doi: 10.1038/s41380-021-01214-x. PMID: 34244620
9. [STAT3 in the dorsal raphe gates behavioural reactivity and regulates gene networks associated with psychopathology.](#) Reisinger SN, Sideromenos S, Horvath O, Derdak S, Cicvaric A, **Monje FJ**, Bilban M, Häring M, Glat M, Pollak DD. *Mol Psychiatry.* 2021 Jul;26(7):2886-2899. doi: 10.1038/s41380-020-00904-2. Epub 2020 Oct 12. PMID: 33046834
10. [Nicotine abolishes memory-related synaptic strengthening and promotes synaptic depression in the neurogenic dentate gyrus of miR-132/212 knockout mice.](#) Stojanovic T, Benes H, Awad A, Bormann D, **Monje FJ**. *Addict Biol.* 2021 Mar;26(2):e12905. doi: 10.1111/adb.12905. Epub 2020 Apr 15. PMID: 32293776
11. [Severe hydroxymethylbilane synthase deficiency causes depression-like behavior and mitochondrial dysfunction in a mouse model of homozygous dominant acute intermittent porphyria.](#) Berger S, Stattmann M, Cicvaric A, **Monje FJ**, Coiro P, Hotka M, Ricken G, Hainfellner J, Greber-Platzer S, Yasuda M, Desnick RJ, Pollak DD. *Acta Neuropathol Commun.* 2020 Mar 20;8(1):38. doi: 10.1186/s40478-020-00910-z. PMID: 32197664
12. [Podoplanin Gene Disruption in Mice Promotes *in vivo* Neural Progenitor Cells Proliferation, Selectively Impairs Dentate Gyrus Synaptic Depression and Induces Anxiety-Like Behaviors.](#) Cicvaric A, Sachernegg HM, Stojanovic T, Symmank D, Smani T, Moeslinger T, Uhrin P, **Monje FJ**. *Front Cell Neurosci.* 2020 Jan 15;13:561. doi: 10.3389/fncel.2019.00561. eCollection 2019. PMID: 32009902
13. [Lmo3 deficiency in the mouse is associated with alterations in mood-related behaviors and a depression-biased amygdala transcriptome.](#) Reisinger SN, Bilban M, Stojanovic T, Derdak S, Yang J, Cicvaric A, Horvath O, Sideromenos S, Zambon A, **Monje FJ**, Boehm S, Pollak DD. *Psychoneuroendocrinology.* 2020 Jan;111:104480. doi: 10.1016/j.psyneuen.2019.104480. Epub 2019 Oct 19. PMID: 31707294

14. [A role for miR-132 in learned safety.](#) Ronovsky M, Zambon A, Cicvaric A, Boehm V, Hoesel B, Moser BA, Yang J, Schmid JA, Haubensak WE, **Monje FJ**, Pollak DD. *Sci Rep.* 2019 Jan 24;9(1):528. doi: 10.1038/s41598-018-37054-z.PMID: 30679653
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16. [Sustained consumption of cocoa-based dark chocolate enhances seizure-like events in the mouse hippocampus.](#) Cicvaric A, Bulat T, Bormann D, Yang J, Auer B, Milenkovic I, Cabatic M, Milicevic R, **Monje FJ**. *Food Funct.* 2018 Mar 1;9(3):1532-1544. doi: 10.1039/c7fo01668a. Epub 2018 Feb 12.PMID: 29431797
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19. [The brain-tumor related protein podoplanin regulates synaptic plasticity and hippocampus-dependent learning and memory.](#) Cicvaric A, Yang J, Krieger S, Khan D, Kim EJ, Dominguez-Rodriguez M, Cabatic M, Molz B, Acevedo Aguilar JP, Milicevic R, Smani T, Breuss JM, Kerjaschki D, Pollak DD, Uhrin P, **Monje FJ**. *Ann Med.* 2016 Dec;48(8):652-668. doi: 10.1080/07853890.2016.1219455. Epub 2016 Aug 25.PMID: 27558977
20. [The effect of modafinil on the rat dopamine transporter and dopamine receptors D1-D3 paralleling cognitive enhancement in the radial arm maze.](#) Karabacak Y, Sase S, Aher YD, Sase A, Saroja SR, Cicvaric A, Höger H, Berger M, Bakulev V, Sitte HH, Leban J, **Monje FJ**, Lubec G. *Front Behav Neurosci.* 2015 Aug 19;9:215. doi: 10.3389/fnbeh.2015.00215. eCollection 2015.PMID: 26347626
21. [Drebrin depletion alters neurotransmitter receptor levels in protein complexes, dendritic spine morphogenesis and memory-related synaptic plasticity in the mouse hippocampus.](#) Jung G, Kim EJ, Cicvaric A, Sase S, Gröger M, Höger H, Sialana FJ, Berger J, **Monje FJ**, Lubec G. *J Neurochem.* 2015 Jul;134(2):327-39. doi: 10.1111/jnc.13119. Epub 2015 Apr 29.PMID: 2586583
22. [STAT3 controls IL6-dependent regulation of serotonin transporter function and depression-like behavior.](#) Kong E, Sucic S, **Monje FJ**, Savalli G, Diao W, Khan D, Ronovsky M, Cabatic M, Koban F, Freissmuth M, Pollak DD. *Sci Rep.* 2015 Mar 11;5:9009. doi: 10.1038/srep09009.PMID: 25760924
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25. [Learning not to fear: neural correlates of learned safety.](#) Kong E, **Monje FJ**, Hirsch J, Pollak DD. *Neuropsychopharmacology.* 2014 Feb;39(3):515-27. doi: 10.1038/npp.2013.191. Epub 2013 Aug 21.PMID: 23963118. Review.
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29. [Proteomics reveals selective regulation of proteins in response to memory-related serotonin stimulation in Aplysia californica ganglia.](#) **Monje FJ**, Birner-Gruenberger R, Darnhofer B, Divisch I, Pollak DD, Lubec G. Proteomics. 2012 Feb;12(3):490-9. doi: 10.1002/pmic.201100418. Epub 2012 Jan 13.PMID: 22162403
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REVIEWS & REPORTS

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