



# FROM VISION TO DECISION

## NEWSLETTER

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## Dear MedViz Supporter

The current issue is almost entirely devoted to an interview with Professor Kenneth Hugdahl from Department of Biological and Medical Psychology, UiB, who now has received his 2nd prestigious ERC Advanced Grant. This has only happened once before in Norway by Nobel Laureate Edvard Moser from NTNU. Both grants to Professor Hugdahl are for the study of brain markers of auditory hallucinations in schizophrenia. Our warmest greetings and congratulations!

## Interview with Professor Kenneth Hugdahl



Professor Kenneth Hugdahl. Photo: Thor Brødreskift

### Background

Professor Kenneth Hugdahl from Department of Biological and Medical Psychology, UiB was born in Östersund, Sweden. -How was it to grow up in Östersund?

-You know, Östersund is a small town in the northern part of Sweden. I have a blue collar working class background. I was the only one in our family and among our relatives who went to the gymnasium, Professor Kenneth Hugdahl memorizes.

-Where did you carry out your University education?

-Actually, I started as a law student at University of Uppsala in 1967, but the law topics did not match my intellectual interests, so I was looking for something more challenging. Then we reached 1968 and everything “exploded” in the society, so to say, facing hippies (a liberal counterculture)

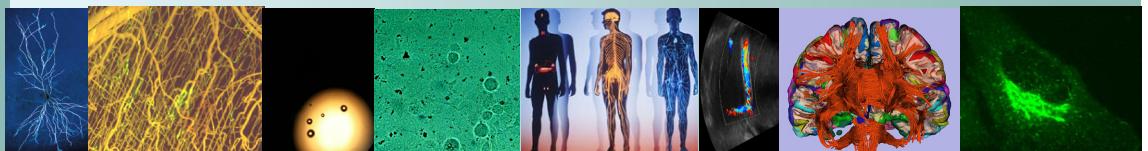
crowding in the parks in almost all the big cities in USA and western Europe, facing the student riots in Paris where the French workers joined the student protests for the first time with a one-day general strike, and facing new music forms like rock and psychedelic music genres. However, people in the law school were not at the forefront to adapt to these overwhelming new megatrends. As a young student I was strongly influenced by the trends and decided to go on with studies of social science and economic history. I also studied psychology because I was academically interested in the brain, the mind and the function of the body, but did not touch brain and behavior in my lower degree studies, Kenneth says.

-Later, when I did my psychology studies, I did a thesis (similar to Master) under supervision of Arne Öhman (later Professor at the Karolinska Institute, Stockholm), and for the first time I did research in biological psychology, studying brain and behavior. The equipment at that time was however far from what we have available today. We performed crude measures of the galvanic skin response, to monitor sweat glands in the fingers as sensors of mental states. The responses from the sweat glands were indirect measures of the autonomous nervous system, and the funny thing is that we nevertheless got reliable data, measured 1 m away from the brain, Kenneth adds with a smile. We applied this to studies of emotional states and in particular phobic anxiety, which became the topic of my PhD-thesis in 1977, entitled “*Conditioning, stimulus relevance, and cognitive factors in phobic fears*”, Professor Hugdahl tells.

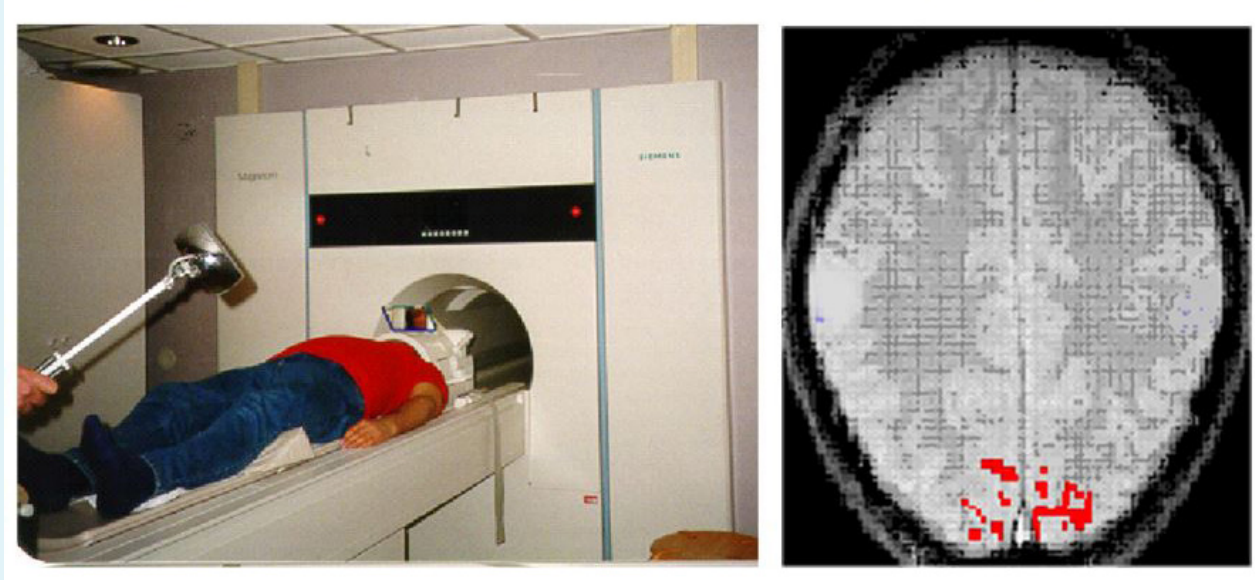
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HELSE BERGEN  
Haukeland University Hospital



-Then I was lucky when I got the opportunity to go to the USA for a postdoc period in Philadelphia in 1979 -1980. I went there together with my wife Märit and our four years old daughter. It was a rough city at the time, and we learned to cope with strange situations that challenged our way of living. There was a clear segregation between different social cultures and a lot of crime, which caused latent fear or uncertainty. All in all, it was an experience for life time for the whole family and I became part of an interesting scientific network this way. Märit studied initially English and History and worked as a teacher in Uppsala. Later she became a special educator for individuals with special needs, when we came to Bergen, and gradually she became a speech therapist as an expert in languages. My lovely wife has thus been my language advisor for some of my later studies on brain asymmetry, Kenneth explains. [Read more of the interview with Hugdahl.](#)



*The Figure to the left shows interior of the very first BOLD-fMRI acquisitions in Norway, at Haukeland University Hospital, autumn 1993. Kenneth Hugdahl is himself the “guinea pig” on his way into the MR machine. Notice the hand held lamp to the left and the mirror on top of the “patient’s” head. The Figure to the right shows the resulting brain activation from the first experiment in the visual cortex after repeated periods of flickering light, alternated with periods of darkness, published in Lundervold et al., 1994.*

## Upcoming events

08. April: MedViz Seminar: Network building and cross-sectional cooperation. Prof. Eyvind Rødahl: MOF Strategy. Dr. Imke Schneeman: Example of a successful health research – industry network in Germany. Sciences Director Alf Henrik Andreassen: Scientific Cooperation at HUH in a Strategic Perspective. <http://www.medviz.uib.no/> See: Seminars 08.04.2016

14. – 15. April: 2nd Symposium of Bridging Nordic Imaging and the 1st Cellular Imaging workshop in Gothenburg, Sweden. <http://ccigothenburg.com/>

02. – 03. May: Medical information revolution – from an average patient to an individual. Førde Central Hospital, Auditorium. <http://www.fjordomics.com/program/>

9. – 10. May: Nordic Health Research and Innovation, NRI Conference: Moving further with Medical Tailoring. The Conference also includes a parallel Workshop on Impact of Imaging and Visualization in Future Medicine & Health Care. Radisson Blu Airport Hotel, Oslo Gardermoen. <http://nordicnetworks.org/nri-conference/program/>

7. – 9. September: MedViz and VCBM joint Conference, Bergen. <http://medvizvcbm.uib.no/>  
Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/770818463024537/>  
Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/medvizvcbm/> (like it!)

17. October: Workshop on Neuroscientific Image Analysis at the Microscopic Scale (NIAMS'16), Athens, Greece. (<https://sites.google.com/site/niams2016/>) will be held in conjunction with the MICCAI conference (<http://www.miccai2016.org/en/>) 17 - 21 October.

21. – 22. November: The 8th National PhD Conference in Medical Imaging takes place at Radisson Blu Royal Garden Hotel in Trondheim.

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