

Female neuroscientist of the month:

Huda Akil

September 2016



She was born in Damascus,
Syria, in 1947

Although women did not usually study in her country, her family found very important to promote her higher education. She studied psychology, like her father

She first focused her research on the relation between language and thinking; pursuing the idea of whether words can have a different effect if they are told in different languages

Then she moved to EEUU to study neurosciences and pharmacology. Later, she started her research in the study of pain

She and her research group were the first describing evidences of the existence of endogenous opioids called **endorphins**, which aim to relieve pain

They also discovered the so-called **Stress-Induced Analgesia**; in which stress situations increase endorphin as a strategy to reduce pain

Currently, she is a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Michigan. She is working on the neurobiology of emotions and mental illness - including pain, anxiety, depression and addictions.

"The business and academic worlds were designed by men and for men (...). Women were just not part of the picture when the structure was being established"
-Huda Akil

